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DAISY BRENTWELL

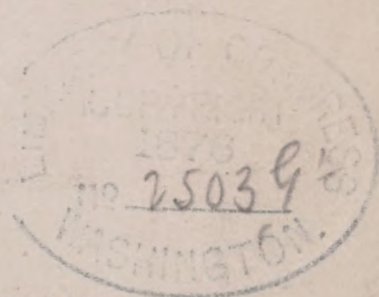
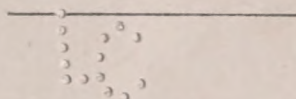
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BY
IRENE WIDDEMER

["IRELAND WARD."]

"If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridled not his tongue
this man's religion is vain."—ST. JAMES, I. 26.

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NEW YORK:
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS,
FOURTH AVENUE AND TWENTY-THIRD STREET.
1876.

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G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS.
1876.



TO
MY MOTHER,
WHOSE SYMPATHY AND ENCOURAGEMENT HAVE BEEN
MY GREATEST AIDS, THIS, MY FIRST STORY,
IS LOVINGLY INSCRIBED.

NEW YORK, 1875.

DAISY BRENTWELL.

CHAPTER I.

'Death! ere thou hast slain another,
Learned and great and good as he,
Time shall throw a dart at thee.'

—BEN JONSON.

DR. DOREANN was dead. The little bell of St. Paul's Church tolled out seventy-six as solemnly as such a brisk, cheerful little bell could toll. It was the very bell that Dr. Doreann had so strongly opposed purchasing during his life-time, maintaining that the old one which had pealed forth its cracked tones for over sixty years, was "in the estimation of any sensible man," to be preferred to any new one that could possibly be purchased. Dr. Doreann had been vestryman and warden of St. Paul's during forty of those sixty years. He had been one of the pillars of the church, the rector's strong friend and supporter; and, during all the years of Mr. Brentwell's rectorship, his wishes and opinions had been more influential than those of any other man in the parish. Five years before the Doctor's

death, when the old church had been torn down, and one of newer fashion built, Doreann had protested against it in vain. His arguments were spoken as unto deaf men ; and when the clergyman and other vestrymen endeavored to convince him of the benefit of a new and substantial building, where feet could be kept warm in the winter, and where no rattling windows would drown the clergyman's voice and keep up a constant discordant chorus to the choir, he in his turn, was deaf. In vain they argued the many colds caught there, the fevers brought on by draughts, and the congregation that was in consequence diminishing. Not a few uncharitable souls gave those very colds and fevers as a reason for the doctor's obstinacy ; and they were not a little ashamed when after the completion of the new church, the doctor subscribed five hundred dollars toward paying off the debt that remained ; it being a larger amount than any one in Newfield had ever thought it possible to give for church purposes. Even with the doctor's gift the worthy church people would never have paid for their new edifice ; other means were employed in order to raise the required sum. And here a second controversy with the doctor was started.

The old church had been built of valuable stone, while the new one was built of frame. Therefore, after the foundation was laid of stone, there was a sufficient quantity remaining to build a house. As they already owned a rectory, and no other building was needed, they concluded to sell it. Fortunately a purchaser was

soon found ; and the price offered was enough to pay off the remaining debt. The clergyman, and the vestrymen with the exception of Dr. Doreann, were delighted with the sale, and would have hastened to close the bargain. To the doctor it was the height of sacrilege. That he should live to see the day, he moaned, when the stone of St. Paul's time-honored church should be converted into a farm-house ! Nor could he be brought to see that there were no other means by which the requisite sum could be raised. But the majority, with the rector's sanction, ruled. So the stone was sold and the church paid for.

Then arose another question ; or one which resolved itself into two. Were the organ and the bell fit for farther use ? The first was quickly settled : the organ was not. Even Dr. Doreann, little as he knew of music and fond as he was of the old instrument, assented to that, and went himself with young Horatio Brentwell to purchase a new one. That was all very well, considering that the old one had ceased to be an instrument of music, seeming more like an instrument of torture, from the sighs and groans and moans which escaped it when any one attempted to play upon it. Yes, the new organ was certainly necessary ; but was the bell ? Again Dr. Doreann waxed eloquent on the subject ; again he spoke unto deaf men, and again he grew deaf when they addressed him. His eloquence was of no avail ; the new bell was bought. Not a grand one like the old one had been, but a small shrill affair, that always

vexed the church people when they heard its tones. Miss Crissy Wells reported—and she was the village authority—that Dr. Doreann actually shed tears when the old bell was taken away to the foundry ; where it was given in part payment for the new one. But whether that was true or not, it was well known that through the few remaining years of his life the good old man never heard the bell without sadly shaking his white head ; and a few years later when some of the enterprising vestry-men proposed having a clock on the church, the doctor threatened to leave the village ; at which the towns-people as with one voice, cried out against the clock. And even Mr. Brentwell said that it would not be a wise step, although having a clock in the tower of St. Paul's Church was the darling wish of his heart.

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Seventy-six ! The little bell tolled out the years in such a lively, defiant manner that it was almost a wonder the doctor could lie so still. Mother Wade, who was at the time, employed in the sad office of preparing him for burial, afterward solemnly averred that she felt the poor old body shake at every stroke : but Mother Wade was not village authority. Ah ! the bell may laugh and jeer in exultation now ; for that gray head will never shake again.

Fifty years before, David Doreann M. D., came to Newfield with his widowed mother and his sister. He hung out his sign, and sat down to wait for patients.

He found it necessary to call into service all the hopefulness and patience that he and his mother and sister possessed, before any came to him. It was known that he sat in that poorly furnished little office for two whole months before he was even called to see a colicky infant ; and Mrs. Doreann would tell, in her childish old age, how David changed the furniture in the office seven times, each time endeavoring to make it look more cheerful and inviting to any one in search of a physician. It is true half the village called upon Mrs. Doreann, and inquired diligently into her affairs, and went away satisfied that they were not starving and were clothed—and there their information ended. The lady and her daughter returned these calls in shabby clothes, and the village gossips after close inspection and comparing of notes, concluded that they wore their best.

But these days came to an end. The doctor's first patient came in the shape of Mr. Van Pike himself. This gentleman and his family, you must know, were the sole aristocrats of the village. He was thrown from his horse, and fortunately for the doctor, directly in front of the office door, and was taken in there immediately. His injuries were serious; but Dr. Doreann was successful, and he soon recovered. Mrs. Luce, who always followed in the wake of the Van Pike's, then employed the young physician for her son who was ill of a fever, and when he recovered nothing was talked of but Doreann's wonderful skill ; and his reputation was fairly established. His practice increased daily. The younger

and unmarried portion of the ladies began growing weakly about this time. They had no direct symptoms, only they required frequent visits from the young physician, for which their papas had to pay very long bills ; but all to no avail. They might one and all have died, and not one spot in his heart would have been touched, save for the loss of a patient. As he grew prosperous the villagers noticed that he paid frequent visits to Fairhope, Newfield's nearest neighbor. And when upon investigation it was proved that a young lady was the attraction, there was a great falling off among his fair patients. At length it was known that he was engaged to a Miss Millie Stout of that village. The people of Newfield several times set his wedding day, but he was not married nevertheless ; and as nothing was heard from the family in reference to the event, it was less and less talked of until the subject was dropped and perhaps forgotten, save by a few maidens who had really taken the handsome physician into their hearts.

About a year after the announcement of his engagement, a great change came over Dr. Doreann. He avoided all gay assemblies of which he had formerly been the life ; he was never heard to laugh or seen to smile, and acted as if he hated the world. He forgot the cheerful and encouraging words he had always had for his patients, and was once known to tell a sick man that he was going to die, when he was really on the way to recovery. He forgot the smile and playful words with which he had greeted the children on the street,

and frightened them as he repulsed them sternly when they made timid advances toward their old friend. He merely recognized his acquaintances when he met them, and completely ignored all young ladies. In short, he went around like one demented ; and it was reported by Miss Crissy Wells, that he was brought home one night intoxicated. But Miss Crissy's talent for gossiping had not at that time, reached the state of perfection it did in after years. We must begin in every vocation, at the foot of the ladder ; and the climbing is slow. Miss Crissy, at the time our story opens, had gained the top round of the ladder of her fame, but in the younger days of Dr. Doreann, she was just starting at the foot. So her statement was not credited by all, especially as there were a few judging friends who whispered that Miss Crissy might be entreated to become Mrs. David Doreann.

The clergyman who was then rector of St. Paul's had always taken a father's interest in the young man, and was greatly pained by the reports that were circulated, and in particular by this last one. He saw that Doreann was losing ground, and that his patients were leaving him. This clergyman was a very old man and one well beloved, not only by his own parish, but by all of the towns-people. He had seen sorrow in his former life, and had come forth from the furnace of affliction with his gold refined.

Miss Nettie and Mrs. Doreann had always attended St. Paul's. The doctor had done so at first, when he was

trying to win patients by his exemplary conduct ; but when they came and his practice was established, he was rarely seen in the church. The clergyman saw this with sorrow, and had long and serious conversations with him on the subject, but apparently with no result. The clergyman sowed his seed, and watered it with his prayers, but God gives the increase ; so the good man waited. There were two other hearts raised in almost hourly supplication for the careless son and brother. And were these prayers answered ? As the Saviour raised to life the son of the widow of Nain, so He brought to life immortal this widow's son.

But there had come a change over Dr. Doreann, but not of the kind they had prayed for. And it was then the good old clergyman dared to approach him again. There is a balm in Gilead, and that balm he poured upon the wounded heart. Dr. Doreann was from that time another man. The prayers which these three righteous persons had offered in faith, were heard. The doctor, who never did anything by halves in his life, certainly did not lead a half-way Christian life. He had given his whole heart to his Saviour, and he followed Him faithfully during the remaining years of his life.

But what of the towns-people during this time ? It is not by any means to be supposed that they kept silent. They looked on in wonder and amazement. He was talked of in every house, by every tongue. And after the usual greeting between neighbors, the first remark generally was, "Have you seen the doctor lately ?"

“How is the doctor?” “They say that Dr. Doreann’s growing worse; my ma thinks he will be crazy soon;” or something of the same character. His sayings were repeated; and when he was seen to pass a house, every member of the family was called to view him and give afresh their opinion of his conduct.

When the second and greater change came over him, and he was known to have become a communicant in St. Paul’s Church, certain good persons of the village were heard to say, “I tol’ ye so. I knew it was his sins that was troublin’ him. If he’d only a’ come to me, now, I’d ’ave taken comfort in p’inting out the evil of his ways. I hope he was in ’arnest, and he’s truly experienced religion, but I don’t know about them ’Piscopal, with their forms, an’ bowin’, an’ sech like.” And in a prayer-meeting shortly after, one man informed the Lord that a new member had been added to the Episcopal Church, expressing a hope at the same time, that He would look after him, and teach him to pray without a book.

A few years later, Newfield was electrified by the intelligence that Miss Millie Stout was married, and had been a long time. So the mystery of the doctor’s strange conduct was solved, and they knew at the same time, as by intuition, that he was not to be regarded as a marrying man. His sister had less young lady friends in consequence; and a few families dropped off from his list, going back to the old physician who was completely married, as his wife was the largest woman

in town, and they had twelve hearty children. But on his death, which occurred soon after, there was no choice allowed ; every one had to go back to Dr. Doreann, as he was the only physician within ten miles or more of Newfield.

Mrs. Doreann had always been weakly, and as she grew old, she became a confirmed invalid, taking to her bed from which she never arose. Twelve years she lay in the pleasant parlor bed-room, upon a bed of pain ; twelve years she watched the busy passers-by, and heard their happy voices ; twelve summers she saw the roses that she had planted in the little garden bloom sweetly and then perish ; twelve winters she saw the snow fall and melt away ; twelve years of uncomplaining waiting ; twelve years a loving son bent over her ; twelve years a faithful daughter gave up all girlish enjoyments, all other loves, for that mother ; twelve years—yet not twelve—a lover waited to claim his betrothed : three months before Mrs. Doreann went to her rest, Nettie's lover was called to his. And by their graves she vowed to make the care of her brother her first duty in life. Faithfully she kept that vow. So they lived on together, growing nearer and dearer to one another as the years passed. The old rector died and Mr. Brentwell was called to fill his place. Between the doctor and this clergyman a strong friendship sprang up, which lasted while Doreann lived.

The physician had not been ill long ; he had caught violent cold and would no doubt have gotten over it, if

he had taken the least care of himself ; but he was one of those few men who think of themselves last ; who say little of the principle of unselfishness, but practise it until their life's end.

One cold night Miss Nettie gave him on retiring, an old-fashioned dose of herb-tea, warranted to cure a cold in one sweating. He had just gotten into the required sweat and was enjoying his first nap, when the office bell rang violently. Miss Nettie's head appeared from the window in answer to it. A withered old man stood below : his wife was ill, he cried. So was the doctor ; his wife must wait until morning ! She would be dead by morning, the little withered man moaned. But Miss Nettie was unrelenting, and the man would have gone home alone if another head had not appeared upon the window-scene. Well, it amounted to this, that the doctor in spite of his sister's entreaties, went home with the withered old man, cured his withered old wife of a slight bilious attack, came home, and died. Not right away ; but in a week. And then it was that St. Paul's brisk little bell announced to the people of Newfield that their well-loved physician was dead. His death was regretted deeply by all ; nothing else was talked of in the village ; and many wept.

There was one pair of eyes that did not weep ; their fountain of tears was wept dry years ago over the graves of an early lover and of a tender mother, who had left her years of waiting, while David was but a day ahead. The skiff that carried him over was returning, and she stood

upon the shore. She had taken her seat by the body of her brother, and there she remained. Visitors—curious, prying visitors—came; sympathizing friends spoke to her; warm hands clasped hers; broken prayers were murmured for her there; but she heeded none. She saw nothing but the dead face that had been David's; she heard nothing but his dying words, and over and over again they sounded in her ears: "They are there, Nettie; father, mother, John. Hasten, sister, we will be waiting for you." Waiting for her! Again and again she muttered it over. Father, mother, John—and now David—together in that celestial home, waiting for her, and she was on earth alone. Oh, so alone! There was not one in the breadth or the width of the land to love her. There were friends, kind ones; but she was only "poor, old Miss Nettie" to them. They pitied her, and many would have taken her into their homes—but she could never have entered their hearts: she would have been—with all their sympathy—an old spinster, in her lonely room, out of the way.

Alone! There was David's hat, and there was his cane in the further corner, where he had put them when he entered that night; and the medicine-case on the office table, where his chilled hands had thrown it—the hands that never felt the life-blood warm in them again. There was the old office furniture, the oil cloth worn where his feet had rested, the leather-covered chair with the hair-stuffing escaping here and there, the book-case filled with old books—now and then one of modern

date, the account-book lying open on his table, the last visit—save this one—recorded, a few stiff chairs ranged around the room, and a little clock, of later purchase, that ticked wearily on the wall. There were a few old man's old-fashioned garments hanging in the closet of his bed-room, and the Bible on the little white-covered stand by the bed-side, and the Prayer-Book from which they had prayed together for fifty years.

There were a few books that mother used to read; and in the corner of the prim parlor stood an old clock solemnly measuring the time, which father and mother purchased with their savings. There was a large oil-painting near it, of a stiff old gentleman in a stiff collar, and with black hair brushed flat down on his face—all that Miss Nettie knew of her father.

There was a little wooden box up stairs, which had been handsome once, with flowers painted upon it—bright wreaths of forget-me-nots. It was sadly defaced, now, and the forget-me-nots were gone from the cover but never from the heart. A package of old letters lay within the box, surrounded by musty love-gifts. The letters were long, and they were *love* letters, genuine ones, of the kind that are never written in these days.

Of the dead and gone these were left her—only these—a few mocking remembrances of father, mother, John, and now David. Father went sixty years before. Mother and John went thirty years ago: looking back now it seemed like yesterday. David stood by her then, and with

his firm, true heart bore her up. Then there were thirty years of peaceful living with him, when he had filled every nook and crevice of her heart, and she of his. And they were years of drawing nearer to God ; years of sweet Christian communion that bore much fruit. And they were waiting for her now, these few loved ones. No word escaped Miss Nettie's closed lips ; she sat with tightly clasped hands, and with her eyes fixed in a strong gaze upon that wrinkled, dead face.

It was the custom in Newfield for every one that the town contained to go and view the corpse while it was laid out in the house. So people of every station and every age and of both sexes, flocked to see the remains of Dr. Doreann. Tears were dropped on his face, and soft kisses were pressed upon his lips ; for the name of the old man's friends had been legion.

It was the day before the funeral. The body had been viewed by about every individual in the town ; and nothing was left but for them to talk it over, and for Miss Nettie to keep watch alone. Mother Wade, who had been employed by Mr. Brentwell to take charge of the house and the half-crazed sister, had with unheard of delicacy, withdrawn to another part of the house. Miss Nettie, at the close of the afternoon, was seated entirely alone when the door of the parlor softly opened, and a little bent-up old woman clad in rusty black entered. She looked anxiously at Miss Nettie as she approached the coffin, but that mourning creature did not raise her eyes. The woman stroked back the gray hair

from the cold forehead with a hand that showed marks of years of toil, as she gazed sorrowfully down on the face. There were lines of care written there that death could not efface. With the same toil-worn hand she tried to smooth them away. Ah ! did she remember the day when she wrote the first thereon ? She took up the stiffened hand, and kneeling down by the corpse, she leaned her head upon it, while her heart went back over the fifty years that had elapsed since those hands had met before ; *then* a youth's strong hand had clasped a maiden's rosy fingers whose clinging tenderness had strengthened his manhood.

“ Oh, David ! David ! ” she wept, “ I did love you ; they told you false. All my life I've loved you. And now you are dead, dead, and I alive.” Cry on, old woman, weep and moan for the anguish you caused that heart. Cry on : what will the dead man care ? Cover his old face with the kisses you refused him once. Lay your gray head on his breast, and let your straggling locks fall on his shoulder. He will not return those caresses ; he will not press you to his bosom ; he will not twine your hair around his fingers, and beg for it ! Ah, but death is stronger than love !

Miss Nettie raised her head when she heard her brother's Christian name uttered ; she had thought that sacred to herself. She looked at the kneeling figure for one moment, then rising, went slowly around to her. She laid her hand upon her head, but as the woman did not look up, she raised the face with her hand.

“Millie,” she said, sadly and in great surprise, “why did you come here?”

The woman, who had been Millie Stout, arose. “Oh, Nettie!” she moaned, “let me stay; I have come to mourn with you.”

CHAPTER II.

"In a dirty old house lived a Dirty Old Man ;
Soap, towels, or brushes were not in his plan.
For forty long years, as the neighbors declared,
His house never once had been cleaned or repaired."

—WILLIAM ALLINGHAM.

NEWFIELD was built upon the bank of a river ; a still, narrow, but deep stream, that seemed to delight to bury loved forms in its depths. In other words, some one was constantly being drowned in it, especially the small boys. So mothers were wont to be rejoiced when evening came, and their young sons were one day longer spared to them ; another day had passed, and the errant boy was yet alive. But the morning's dawn only served to renew their fears and anxiety.

A little less than a mile above the village there lived an old fisherman—Sam Lukens by name—who was noted among other things, for the length and improbability of his yarns and his willingness to spin them. Here the school-boys flocked on Saturdays, and sat with open mouth and ears taking in his wonderful adventures, his miraculous draughts of fishes and hair-breadth escapes from drowning. A few larger boys could *not* credit his encounters with the whales, which, he said, had taken place a few years before in that very same river "Before Newfield was settled," he would say, "the river was full

of them. Many a one I've caught with my rod and line, measuring a half a mile long." But they excused this little inaccuracy, and put more faith in the next story.

In vain parents protested against these visits, where the boys learned so much harm. They talked to them on the first offence; and Sam's imperfections were brought out with startling plainness. Next they threatened, and on the third visit the youth was severely punished. But there was not a boy in Newfield, with a morsel of pluck, who would not have endured whippings, dark closets, supperless beds, father's prayers, and worse than all—mother's tears—a score of times, to be able to pay one visit to Sam Lukens. There were, to be sure, a few slow boys in the village who had no taste for literature—as Sam related it; no taste for the romantic—in Sam's boat; no taste for history—of Sam's knowledge; no desire to become accomplished—as Sam was; but then there are always such chicken-hearts in every place, and any boy knows that they are not worth minding.

Lukens' hut comprised one room. He had built it himself, and of such materials as logs, mud, and *strayed* shingles. A low door hung somewhere about the centre, and there was a small window in either end, filled with rags and muddy panes. The roof was flat and thatched with straw from the neighboring fields, and boards from the neighboring fences. The cot faced the river and the narrow road ran between; to the back was Farmer Mayhew's potato patch—Sam lived on fish and potatoes. It was one of his boasts that a woman's foot had never

crossed his threshold ; it could well be a woman's prayer that it might never be necessary.

Passers-by looked on the squalid shanty with elevated noses, and hastened by ; but the outside was purity compared with the interior. The one room it contained was not more than ten feet square ; the walls had never been plastered, and the chinks and crevices were filled with mud. The floor was made of boards from Farmer Mayhew's fence, but many years' mud and grease had placed them beyond recognition ; and Sam's floor was double its original depth. Tobacco, broken pipes, ashes, potato-skins, fish-bones and scales, and bits of rags and paper, carpeted that floor. His bed, a bundle of straw, lay in one corner. A broken table and a few chairs completed the furniture of the room. The walls were ornamented with fishing-tackle, old baskets, nets, guns, hoes, shovels, pipes, soiled coats, worn jackets, and oars of various sizes, which would fit all the neighboring boats ; and Sam possessed keys to unlock all the padlocks of those boats. But he owned a boat himself. Sam would not have been Sam without that boat. Yet there was nothing surprising in the fact that he preferred his neighbors' ; for his own leaked, and was slimy and fishy, and the painting, if it ever had been painted, was a thing of the past ; for no vestige of color remained upon it. The seats were broken, and the oars fitted poorly—altogether it was a worn-out old skiff.

Sam was short and thick-set. His head was almost upon his shoulders, his neck being so short that it was

not worth mentioning. His small eyes, which were set deep in his head, were cold hard gray—unfeeling, murderous gray eyes that no one looked into without shuddering. But they were not a prominent feature of his face ; they were too much shaded by the shaggy eyebrows and lashes to be well seen. His square forehead was quite hidden by the matted gray hair, which, he boasted, had not been combed or cut for years, and likely never would be again. The lower portion of his face was covered an iron-gray beard ; and the immense red nose, and the small part of his bronzed cheeks that was seen, were badly pitted with small-pox. Sam's garments in the summer time were few : in winter he generally wore his whole wardrobe at one time, and then was dressed in rags.

There was certainly nothing in Lukens' external appearance that attracted the village boys and attached them to him. His attractions consisted in a few natural things. First, he was the rage : what one boy does, another boy must do, and *one* boy had become interested in his tales and brought others. These long stories were always "to be continued" at the next visit, after the fashion of the Arabian Nights' Entertainments—so one visit never sufficed. And in the second place, he displayed his accomplishments, which were not a few in number, to the delight of the admiring youths. He was particularly adept in sleight-of-hand ; and would sometimes reward a special service performed for him by one of the boys, by instructing him in some trick. So

many of them became his willing servants. And when he sailed in his old boat, gentlemen's sons rowed for him, gentlemen's sons baited his hook, gentlemen's sons took off the fish, and there were gentlemen's sons to wait upon him generally. Sometimes they went as far in his service, when an extra inducement was offered, as to sell the fish in Fairhope, or in Luntown, a village on the opposite bank of the river. But this was rarely repeated, and never after the boys' parents heard of it, which they did usually and in a marvellously short time.

Among Sam's acquirements were stealing, lying, swearing, drinking, smoking, and chewing. These he taught without any wish for recompense, doubtless feeling that his reward for doing so would come in another world.

Saturdays and Sundays were his court days. Then he sat upon his three-legged throne, relating wonderful adventures. In his mouth was a little black pipe. Only upon one occasion had he allowed himself to get angry with one of his visitors. One Sunday afternoon a new boy came to visit the hut. He was there but a short time when he was filled with regret for having thus disobeyed his parents, and for not having kept the Lord's Day holy. So to make his conscience easier, he determined to preach a short but impressive sermon to Sam, that would result in the old man's immediate conversion, and by doing so perform a lasting service for Newfield, and render himself noted among its inhabitants.

“Sam,” he began, “don’t you ever go to church?”

“No,” growled Sam.

“Well,” he continued, waxing eloquent, “it’s very wrong not—”

Lukens seized the boy by the collar and threw him out of the open door, swearing awful oaths and muttering curses upon the would-be missionary’s head.

“Get home with you,” he said savagely, “and if you ever come here again, it’ll be the last of your sneaking face.”

The child picked himself up, and ran home at the top of his speed. When he penitently acknowledged his sin to his parents, they felt very thankful to Sam for his conduct; for that act saved their boy from ruin.

In all the town of Newfield, Sam Lukens had possessed but one friend; and that had been Dr. Doreann. What strange tie bound these two men of such widely different natures together, no one knew. But it *was* known that they had been true friends all the years of Sam’s sojourn in the village.

CHAPTER III.

“They grew in beauty side by side ;
They filled one home with glee.”

—MRS. HEMANS.

ST. PAUL'S Church stood on the bank of the river, about a mile below Sam Lukens' hut. It was a little brown frame building. It was not in the least Gothic, but clap-boarded, and had two tiers of small windows of plain glass.

Mr. Brentwell, who had been the rector for over twenty years, came there fresh from theological studies and was admitted to the priesthood in the old church within the space of a year. Immediately after this ordination his salary was raised from four hundred to six hundred dollars, and several of the laymen hinted that a clergyman's wife would be acceptable in the parish ; that he could now afford to get married ; and they spoke of their willingness to purchase the little stone house next door to the church for a parsonage. And the ladies talked of quilting-parties, carpet weavings, house warmings and so forth, before the young man. He did not appear to notice these things, but they had the desired effect. One morning in the early spring he left the village, informing no one of his errand or destination ; and in regard to both of which speculation was rife.

And the particular Mrs. Grundy to whose care the morals of Newfield were intrusted, was highly incensed and justly indignant that she had not been consulted, when after a week's absence, he returned, accompanied by a blushing little lady whom he introduced as Mrs. Brentwell.

The ladies of St. Paul's parish were so gratified by his ready perception of their very plain and profuse hints, and so pleased by his compliance with them, that they soon forgave him for not making known his intentions. They were surprised to learn that he had been engaged to be married to the lady for many years, and that it had only been his inability to support a wife that had delayed the marriage.

The stone house was bought, and the ladies revelled in the anticipated quiltings and weavings. A striped carpet of wondrous beauty was woven for the parlor; counterpanes and linen sheets for the beds. Comforters were pieced and quilted. Mrs. Brentwell's father gave them some plain furniture for the parlor; and Mr. Brentwell had saved a small sum from his salary, which together with the few articles donated by the gentlemen of the parish, completed the furnishing; and the clergyman and his wife were domiciled therein. There was not a happier home in all Newfield than theirs became. The parishioners found it out; so their visitors were numerous. And to the great regret of the young rector, there was rarely an evening alone with his wife; there were gentlemen in the study discussing theology or politics; ladies in the sitting-room talking of the fashions,

repeating wonderful recipes for cooking, comparing notes on patterns or bed-quilts, or making known some great discovery in the dyeing art—an unfailing way to make colors fast. There were few in Newfield who kept servants ; so the ladies were silent on that highly edifying theme, which housekeepers now-a-days find to be such a prolific topic of conversation. Mrs. Brentwell's mother with the assistance of her two daughters, had done the housework for a large farm ; the only hired servants being the men, who ate with the family, and considered themselves part of it. Most of the Newfield ladies would have had the same experience to relate. So when Mrs. Lewis announced that her Ann was getting to be a “splendid ironer ; she could beat *her* all holler,” it was considered the best eulogium that a mother could bestow upon her daughter ; and the listening dames nodded approvingly, while the aspiring maidens who were present, secretly determined to practise up in the smoothing art.

Mrs. Brentwell was a little below medium height : she was strong and healthy and went through her daily tasks with little fatigue, although those tasks were not few or light. She arose the year around, at an early hour : milking came first—an art of which “dear George” was happily ignorant ; then the chickens and ducks were fed, the dairy work done, breakfast prepared and eaten, the dishes washed, and the already tidy house “put to rights.” Then followed baking, washing, ironing, or whatever that day might have been set apart for.

Dinner came at twelve. Making, mending, patching, darning, or spinning, occupied the afternoon. After the supper the poultry were again fed and sent to roost ; the milking was repeated, and cows properly put to bed ; and when Mrs. Brentwell herself retired, it was always with the happy remembrance of a good day's work done, and done well.

She went on in this busy life for two years, when another care was added in the shape of an infant boy—as handsome a child as children always are in their extreme youth ; but a care notwithstanding his beauty. Mr. Brentwell was much impressed by the arrival of the stranger. He went around like one in a dream, forgetting that men have been fathers since Cain came into the world, and like Adam, feeling himself to be the first. He felt the responsibility of being a parent from the hour of the infant's birth, and grew grave accordingly : it was a serious thing to have an undying soul committed to his keeping. So while his wife lay thinking what the child's name should be, Mr. Brentwell retired to his study to meditate and pray for him and to devise plans for the course which he should pursue in bringing him up in the way he should go. The name did not enter his thoughts until a few days later, when Mrs. Brentwell suggested that the baby should be called Herbert Augustus, which was her ideal of a name. The clergyman was horrified. Herbert Augustus ! his son, his only son ! never ! Why not Andrew, after his father, or Ephraim after her brother, or David for the doctor ?

Mrs. Brentwell, figuratively speaking, arose in her wrath. Andrew ! Ephraim ! David ! of all names none uglier, or more inappropriate for the little darling ! Mr. Brentwell returned to his study, and spent the remainder of the day in examining the list of Christian names which the Dictionary contained, while Mrs. Brentwell shed a few silent tears over her lost Herbie, and set her busy mind to work to find a name that would, while it was beautiful, meet with the approbation of her husband. The result was that after a long and earnest consultation, the parents found that they would both have to yield their tastes ; and the child was called Horatio. He was baptized at the age of four weeks, in a gorgeously embroidered robe—a gift from the ladies of the parish.

When all of these preliminaries were settled, the child began to grow rapidly, and increased astonishingly in weight and beauty—being in the eyes of the young parents the handsomest of all children ever born—and there never would be another equal to him. Nor were they the only ones who considered him such a prodigy ; half the church—that is the older portion whose infants were grown up—thought him the most remarkable babe in Newfield since their own were young. Horatio bore all of these honors with indifference, and conducted himself as infants generally do. At times he was good and would obligingly sleep half the day, unmindful of the number of times the bowed window-shutters were softly opened, and he was displayed by his happy mother to an

admiring neighbor ; and at other times, especially in the night season, his wakefulness and screams were amazing. He would rouse his dignified father from a dream of a bishopric, and force him to walk the floor with him in his arms until the poor man was distracted with fatigue and real fear that the child was insane : no rational being, he declared, *could* go on in this manner.

When Horatio was a little over two years old, another child was born to them. This time, to Mrs. Brentwell's delight, it was a girl. But Mr. Brentwell was much troubled ; he was doing his duty by the boy, and bringing him up in the proper way, but as for a girl—he had no idea what way she should go in. So he showed very little interest in her ; and the neglect greatly pleased his wife, who imagined that he would be quite as indifferent concerning the choice of the name, and she studied and thought again to choose a beautiful one. The result of her meditations was, that the child's full name should be Isabella Evangeline, and she should be called Bella or Eva, for short. She laughed to herself, as she kissed the little dark face that lay beside her, and then sent for her husband and communicated her intentions to him. He made no reply to her eager remarks, but looked at her tongue, felt her pulse, and shook his head solemnly as he inquired of the nurse the length of time that she had been in this critical state. Mrs. Brentwell and that lady made no answer, but to stare at him, and there was a general misunderstanding as he left the room, which he endeavored to remedy by send-

ing for the physician. When Dr. Doreann arrived, he soon convinced him that his wife was perfectly sane, and that "Isabella Evangeline" was simply the result of having read too many novels in her girlhood. But, notwithstanding this wise consultation, Mrs. Brentwell continued to call the child by that name ; and Mother Wade, who was the nurse, grew very loquacious at times on the subject of the "sweet Bella," and "little angel Eva," to Mr. Brentwell's annoyance. He said nothing, however, but waited until his wife was fully recovered, hoping that by that time she would herself see how very ridiculous such a name was, and would be content with something plain and sensible. But as time passed, and even the village people talked of "Bella Brentwell," and "Eva" was frequently inquired after, he determined that it was high time something was done. So one evening when he was certain that his wife was perfectly rational, he mentioned the name for the first time, and asked her if she really desired that the babe should be called Isabella Evangeline. Mrs. Brentwell replied that she earnestly did desire it. He advised her to consider ; would nothing else please her ? No, nothing ; not if she considered a hundred years ! Then the child should be baptized the following Sunday, Mr. Brentwell said ; and the subject was dropped.

It was not his custom to baptize any one during the service, so when it was concluded on Sunday afternoon, Mrs. Brentwell entered with the sponsors and Horatio ; and a few friends, who were aware that the ceremony

was to take place, remained to witness it. They gathered around the font, and the clergyman began to read the solemn service. At the proper time he took his daughter in his arms.

“Name this child,” he said.

“Isabella Evangeline,” responded his wife in clear, distinct tones.

Mr. Brentwell paused, looked at her for a moment, and at the child. Then, as if he had weighed the act well and was prepared to suffer the consequences, he said, as he placed the water upon the infant form—“Deborah, I baptize thee,” etc.

Mrs. Brentwell quickly opened her mouth to correct him, but one look at her husband’s determined face sufficed ; the mouth went shut without a word. At first she was astonished, then indignant, then she wanted to cry, but resolved on revenge. Her mind was so occupied with these thoughts that she heard little of the remaining service. When it was over she went immediately from the church, scarcely replying to any one who addressed her, walking so swiftly that little Horatio who clung to her skirts, was kept on a smart trot.

She sat down in the sitting-room to collect her thoughts and await her husband’s return, which was *not* immediately ; and when he did enter at length, he went directly to his study. Thither she followed him, carrying her much abused child, and dragging Horatio along with her. Well, she was revenged, and by woman’s great weapon—tears. “She stooped to con-

quer," and conquer she did. At the end of a half an hour Mr. Brentwell regretted his course ; at the end of an hour he acknowledged his regret ; before two hours had passed he was on his knees before her, promising that the child should have any nick-name possible, that she should never be called Deborah once in her life. Mrs. Brentwell showing symptoms of recovery at this, he went on to say that if there should ever be any more children born to them she should name them, and that he would baptize them by that name. This entirely restored her ; and after some thought, she decided that Deborah could very well be nick-named Daisy ; and Daisy the child was called ever afterward. Mrs. Brentwell secretly repented of her course, and though she did not acknowledge it, she never in her life again so forgot her womanhood as to resort to hysterics.

Two years later, when twins were born to them, they did not forget their compact. The babes were both girls ; and it was some months before Mrs. Brentwell could decide upon their names. She would at times, desperately consult her husband, and refuse his counsel. But at length, she called them Christie and Lestie. Mr. Brentwell was secretly quite pleased at this choice ; for he had feared that one would be Arabella, and the other Isabella. All Newfield applauded her fine taste. The junior warden's wife, who was at that time deliberating between two dyes for a new parlor carpet, came to consult her in consequence.

In three years a second boy was born, and was imme-

diately named Herbert by his mother. But four years after, when another son was given them, Mrs. Brentwell relented, and gave her husband permission to name him, but with the condition that the name would be neither Andrew, Ephraim, David, or any of those "awful," names. Mr. Brentwell, remembering that Lestie and Christie were not Isabella and Arabella, readily promised, and named the child Paul after the Apostle, dedicating him unto the Lord with prayers and tears ; dedicating him as he had done no other child. Ah ! good man, thy prayer shall be answered ; the Lord will accept thy gift, but not until thou and he have passed through a furnace of affliction, where he shall be purified, and thou shalt be taught the power of Him to Whom thou offerest thy gift.

At the period at which our story opens, Horatio was nearly twenty-one years of age. He was tall, slender, and handsome, with dark blue eyes and wavy light hair, which he wore, contrary to the prevailing fashion, brushed back of his ears. His easily dampened spirits were at present overcast by a cloud which threatened to be serious. He had been studying medicine with Dr. Doreann for the past year ; and with his friend and preceptor's death, his brightest hopes sank. He had had free access to the old physician's library, and had gladly availed himself of the privilege ; but now he was without means to pursue his studies, or to purchase books. He was ambitious, and while he studied hard and progressed with wonderful rapidity, he had

dreamt dreams of future greatness ; he had built high castles in Spain. But he was rudely awakened from the dreams, and the castles lay in mocking ruins.

Deborah, or always Daisy, the next in years to Horatio, was small, slender, and very delicate, and the only brunette of the family. There were some persons in Newfield who thought her beautiful, while others considered her the plainest looking girl in the village. It was not strange that they were so divided in their opinions ; for she was one of those few persons who are at times perfectly beautiful, and again, in the same garment, and in another light, are really homely. Her eyes were deep-set, and dark rings of ill-health always encircled them ; her cheeks were thin and pale ; but her mouth was beautiful.

Her disposition was as contradictory as her face. She was gentle, loving, and unselfish, enduring silently the pain that seemed to be wearing her life away ; but under that sweet smile and gentle manner there was a sleeping fire—she possessed a terrible temper. She feared its out-bursts, and vainly endeavored to overcome them. Bitterly would she repent of her passion, and form great resolutions of never yielding again ; but the resolutions were broken ; and sadder still, she would never acknowledge her fault—a false pride kept her from craving pardon from any one whom she might have injured.

To these two the younger children looked up with the greatest affection. Daisy's delicate health was

always winning sympathy, while her usual gentleness won love. Horatio, strong and manly, commanded their respect while his despondent hours drew their hearts closely to him.

The twins, Christie and Lestie, were of exactly opposite temperaments : Christie at sixteen was a Christian woman ; Lestie was a petulant, self-willed child. They were both taller than their older sister, with softly rounded figures and an abundance of light hair, which Christie coiled around her shapely head, and Lestie braided in long plaits, which reaching below her waist, were her chief pride. Christie was hopeful and cheerful, the comfort of her parents ; Lestie was lively abroad, and fault-finding and peevish at home, ready, and almost waiting for a quarrel with any one. Christie was the beauty not only of the family but of Newfield ; Lestie was not at all pretty, but wonderfully attractive in her manners, when she chose to be, and she did choose in the society of strangers.

Herbert was like Christie in disposition, and resembled her greatly in feature. He was a good boy ; that is to say, he endeavored to be good. He had his downfalls and his uprisings, his sins and repentances. Every day he left undone what ought to have been done, and did what ought not to have been done. So it will easily be seen that he was no more like the model boy in the Sunday-school books, who lives a few years upon earth for an example to the rest of the world, who never does a wrong act, or leaves a good one undone, and who is

guilty of no boyish sins whatever, than he was like the gentleman who is supposed to inhabit the moon.

Paul was the youngest, and as we have said, had been named by his father after St. Paul and set apart by prayers to follow in that apostle's footsteps. He was a handsome child of nine, far behind in his studies, and far advanced in all manner of mischief—the one wanderer from the fold (St. Paul's Rectory), the inevitable stray sheep. He was one of Sam Lukens' most ardent followers, and strange to relate, to all appearances Sam's favorite. Paul had never meant to sink to the level of that old man and his associates, but he was easily influenced, and had been led on by the older boys; and his reception at the den had really been so flattering that it had not been forgotten by any who witnessed it.

The introduction had occurred about a year before the time of which we write. The boys ushered him in with the most approved boy-fashion, calling out that here was a new fellow, Paul Brentwell.

"Paul who?" thundered Sam, who usually acknowledged such introductions by a grunt, or less, taking no more notice of the new-comer for some time.

"Paul Brentwell," repeated the boys.

"What Brentwell?"

"The parson's boy."

Sam scowled. "Come here, you rat."

Paul obeyed tremblingly. Sam laid his dirty hand heavily on his shoulder.

“So you’re the parson’s boy?” he said. “What do you come here for?”

“I don’t know,” stammered Paul, telling the truth in his fright.

“You don’t know, hey?” The old, sin-stained man looked at the fresh, youthful face before him, regarding it savagely, while the boys stood by and gazed in amazement.

For one moment Sam’s better angel—a sad, dispirited, wasted creature, with torn and drooping wings that showed sad conflicts and many defeats—hovered near him. He opened his mouth to speak the words murmured in his ear, but they were not uttered; a legion of evil spirits beat the angel away and breathed poison in Sam’s heart, and his mouth shut grimly.

He smiled savagely the next moment, as he said: “I’m glad to see you. I hope you’ll come often; and I’ll teach you a few tricks that I know.”

Paul thanked him!

Sam’s conduct was the theme of the boys’ conversation for weeks afterward, and Paul was quite a lion among them in consequence. Lukens true to his word, did teach him a few tricks—but, alas! not so much sleight-of hand as of mouth; for, after a few simple ones of the former, he was instructed in lying, smoking, and swearing; stealing and drinking would come in due season, time enough yet for them; for he was young, and learned quickly. He soon swore a manly round oath

with perfect ease ; and smoked a pipe with the assurance of a man of the world.

In the course of time, it came to Mr. Brentwell's ears that one of his sons—his Paul—was a frequent and favored visitor at Sam Lukens' hut. But he did not know, unfortunately, to what an alarming extent Paul had progressed in wickedness under Sam's tuition. There was a scene at the rectory that day. Paul was wept over by every member of the family ; caressed, prayed for, talked to, entreated, and finally threatened. The boy wept, promised reformation, and returned the caresses ; for he was an impulsive child, repenting truly of his sins, but often going astray when the good emotions ceased. He did not visit Sam again for one month. By that time, he had forgotten his promise, as well as the sorrow he had caused his parents ; and Sam had repeatedly sent messages to him to return. That was an unusual course for the old man to pursue, so Paul appreciated the condescension, yielded to the entreaties of his forbidden associates, and resumed his former intimacy ; and thereafter no home chastisements could avail. He persisted in his evil way, visiting the house surreptitiously whenever he had an opportunity—pursuing his education of vice.

The rectory was built of stone, with a small wing on either side ; a wide, cool hall ran through the house, and four rooms opened out of it, two on either side. The first, on the right hand on entering, was the parlor. A large square room, furnished according to Newfield fashion with a home-made carpet on the floor, six stiff

cane-bottomed chairs, a cane rocking-chair and a hair-cloth sofa, whose slippery propensities made it impossible for people to keep from landing on the floor when they rashly seated themselves upon it. There was a small black table between the two front windows, with curiously carved legs, which had the appearance of having once twisted themselves up to show the stiff furniture what *they* could do, and, having done too much, had spent the remainder of their years in trying to untwist, only growing more entangled with every effort. A number of solemn books with solemn bindings were ranged around the corners of this table in fantastical style—altogether out of keeping with their solemnity—and piled in pyramids in the centre. These books were the light reading of the family. The children had been brought up upon them, and knew most of them by heart. Among them were Young's Night Thoughts, Poems by Cowper, and Henry Kirke White, Milton's Poetical Works, Goldsmith's Works, and some of Sir Walter Scott's novels—these last for the sake of the history they contained.

A high, painted mantle-piece was over the fire-place, directly opposite to the table. Two orderly rows of half-open daguerrotypes extended from one end to the other, temptingly disclosing views of stiff women in ponderous bonnets and with smooth hair combed down over the face, stiff men in collars that came up to the chin, and stiff spread-out hands and staring eyes—all wearing a terribly conscious picture look. These stiff folks were

the relations far and near of Mr. and Mrs. Brentwell—their aunts, uncles, cousins, old and young ; and there were even some babies among them. The children had never seen the originals of these portraits, but they knew their names and histories quite as well as they did the books on the table. Over the mantle hung a picture of a lady in black weeping violently by an enormous green grave which had a correspondingly enormous head-stone. The afflicted lady held an immense handkerchief—a small-sized sheet in the picture—to her eyes, and “ Martha L. Brentwell ” was printed across it. Upon the stone was her mother’s name, and the date of her decease : the whole affair representing the grief which Mrs. Brentwell was supposed to feel at the loss. A few prints, in dark wood frames, hung round the walls, and completed the furniture of the room. One wing opened out of the parlor, and was used as a guest-chamber. Back of the parlor was Mr. Brentwell’s study, and the second door on the right-hand side of the hall entered into it.

Directly opposite to the parlor was the family-sitting-room. No stiffness had ever characterized this place : in the depth of the winter, the cold kitchen was deserted, and all the cooking, baking and eating were done in this room ; thereby saving an extra fire, and keeping much more comfortable. There were no pictures or stiff daguerrotypes here ; a few wreaths of evergreens hung around the wall, giving a cheerful appearance to the room. There was a bright cushioned settee in one corner, and three small rocking-chairs in front of

the fire-place. The chairs were the inevitable straight-back windsor ; but they never looked solemn, their dignity had been taken out of them years before, when childish hands had constructed stage-coaches out of them, and turned them into church pews. Horatio (when they were pews) would envelop himself in a sheet, and take his stand upon the settee, while the children would be seated upon the chairs, which were always ranged in single file ; as the architects had an eye more to the length than the breadth of their church. Daisy, being the eldest, occupied the front seat ; Lestie and Christie took turns in sitting in the next. Then came Herbert, Paul, and finally Mrs. Brentwell with her sewing, seated there for the double purpose of swelling the numbers and keeping Paul in his seat. Horatio summed up all in his sermon of one sentence, that is preached in the length and breadth of the land—"Be good," he would say. "Daisy, be good. Lestie and Christie, be good. Herbert, be good. Paul, be good. Children, be good." A busy little clock ticked on the mantel-piece ; a small table stood between the two front windows—one of those convenient tables which are always so well filled. No matter how many times in a day it was arranged, and the surplus removed, five minutes afterward there were Paul's cap, Herbert's ball, Horatio's books, Daisy's sewing, Christie's knitting, Mr. Brentwell's newspaper, Mrs. Brentwell's glasses, and numerous other articles, upon it. Last year's Almanac, for reference, this year's, for reading, a Bible and Prayer Book, a pamphlet or

two, and Mrs. Brentwell's work-basket, alone belonged there ; but they rarely had undisputed possession. Opposite this table was the door communicating with the kitchen, and the one opposite the hall door led into Mrs. Brentwell's sleeping apartment, which was the second wing. There were four large rooms on the second floor ; and they were the children's sleeping-rooms. Daisy occupied the one over the sitting-room. Horatio's adjoined it. The younger boys slept over the parlor, and Lestie and Christie over the study.

The church property amounted to almost three acres of ground. A large grave-yard surrounded the church, and was divided from the rectory garden by a picket-fence, in which there were two gates and three stiles for the convenience of the rector and his family ; thereby leaving no excuse for their non-attendance at church on the ground that the fence was a barrier. The garden in front of the house was cut up into flower-beds of every imaginable size and shape. The large diamond in the centre of the yard belonged jointly to Lestie and Christie, who were never known to have anything apart. Daisy's plot was situated on the side toward the church, and resembled a great pie cut for Christmas dinner ; for it was immense and round, and the paths which divided it all started from equal points, and met in the middle : one naturally wondered what immense knife cut the pie.

Horatio, Herbert, and Paul cultivated the north side. The eldest sons showed great taste, and it was from their patches the choicest roses, the sweetest pinks, and most

delicate lilies came. But Paul's was a different affair altogether. Roses and lilies never bloomed there; no pinks sent forth their fragrant breath from the little bed down by the fence. There, tall sunflowers reared their lordly heads, and followed the course of their king through the long, hot summer's day; marigolds vied with them in yellowness; hollyhocks emulated them in height; bleeding heart and coxcomb illuminated the spot, and a few peonies and tulips bloomed there in the spring—and that was all that it contained. Paul had really thought seriously, one year, of planting lady's-slipper, but had decided that there was not enough style in them, and abandoned the idea. This patch was a source of great vexation to the older children. Herbert would threaten to board it up so that not a vestige of even the tallest sunflower could be seen; and Lestie's threats of pulling them up by the roots made their ardent admirer toe the mark for her on all such occasions. The fact of the bed being down by the fence made it a great deal worse, for it was so much more plainly seen. Lestie declared that they were visible a half a mile away.

Sunflowers and hollyhocks in the minister's garden! Mother Wade said it was "awful." Miss Crissy Wells never went by without shutting her eyes—and walking into the gutter. As our story opens in the month of March, there were no flowers in bloom in any portion of the garden; but endless bundles of seeds adorned the shelves of the various closets up stairs. Paul's immense packages of private seeds were under lock and key, and

the key was hung around his neck with a white string, and sleeping or waking there it reposed.

The front of the house was almost entirely covered with woodbine, which twined over the little porch, making it in summer a beautiful green arbor. It was a cozy, homelike little rectory ; and one of the happiest families in Newfield dwelt therein.

CHAPTER IV.

“Unveil thy bosom, faithful tomb ;
Take this new treasure to thy trust
And give these sacred relics room
To slumber in the silent dust.

“Nor pain, nor grief, nor anxious fear,
Invade thy bounds ; no mortal woes
Can reach the peaceful sleeper here
While angels watch the soft repose.”

—DR. WATTS.

IT was the day of Dr. Doreann's funeral. The sun was throwing genial rays upon the rectory, and melting great quantities of the snow heaped in the garden and on the roof. Drop, drop, it came through the long tin pipe into the tub at the bottom. The tub was almost full : Mrs. Brentwell had gone to the door twice to see this with her own eyes, and congratulated herself several times that she would not have to melt snow for the next washing, as she had done since the cistern froze in January. Paul blessed his good fortune, too, remembering who had carried the snow in—with a *little* assistance from Herbert ; and Mr. Brentwell rejoiced that he had attended to having the pipe mended last week, or all the water would have been wasted.

The funeral was appointed to meet in the house at one o'clock in the afternoon, and in the church at two. There had been an early dinner at the rectory in conse-

quence, and now all were busy, preparing to go. Mr. Brentwell, to save an extra fire, studied and wrote in the sitting-room ; and by dint of long practice had acquired that perfection in writing in a noisy roomful, so that he did not put down more than half the conversation in his sermon. His congregation was sometimes electrified by the propositions that he set forth ; but another fire could not be afforded, and he had already caught a severe cold by sitting in the study without one. To be sure, he had worn three cloaks, but they were more trouble than profit ; for they were continually slipping off, and required much of his time to hold them on.

He was seated this afternoon by the sitting-room table, looking over and correcting his sermon ; he always preached a short one at funerals. Mrs. Brentwell sat in a chair before the fire, slowly rocking to and fro, as she mended one of Herbert's gloves. She had a sweet face, where care and toil had counterfeited time, as they stamped upon her features and bleached her hair snowy white. There is one word in the English language that will describe her completely, that one sweet word the children called her by a hundred times a day—"Mother." She was one of those few women whose memory will shield a child in the greatest temptation. It is the mother, rarely the father, who moulds the hearts of children : Mrs. Brentwell had with gentle hands moulded the hearts of her children into love : the kind admonitions and loving advice that had come from that

chair by the fire-place might have filled volumes, and the world would have been better for having read them.

Lestie sat upon the floor, lacing up her best shoes. Christie knelt behind her, braiding her long glossy hair into shining plaits—Lestie rarely did it for herself. Herbert was vigorously blacking his boots by the kitchen door ; and Paul was combing his hair before the mirror which hung over the table, to his father's great annoyance. Horatio and Daisy, who had performed their toilets in the privacy of their cold chambers, had done it as quickly as possible, and were now seated in the warm family room.

“ My heart never ached for any one as it does for Miss Nettie,” Mrs. Brentwell was saying, as she wiped her eyes with Herbert's glove for the fifth time since the mending began.

“ Dear me ! I wish I had some one to black my boots,” said Paul, turning away from the mirror, satisfied that his hair was well plastered on all sides.

“ Oh, Paul ! how you look with your hair that way ! ” cried Lestie.

“ My hair's all right : it takes the shine all off of yours, any how.”

“ I think of Horatio, when I see her grief,” Daisy said, in reply to her mother's remark.

“ Why of me ? ”

“ Because we would feel so dreadful if you were dead.”

“ Nonsense,” Horatio affectionately said.

“ Dear Daisy, don't talk that way,” said Christie,

beginning to cry, while tears dropped upon Herbert's shining boots.

Mrs. Brentwell's voice was entirely gone, and Lestie and Paul were seen to wipe their eyes, when Mr. Brentwell, leaning back in his chair, burst into a hearty laugh.

The weeping family looked up in astonishment. A wild fear assailed Mrs. Brentwell, that her husband was losing his mind.

"What's the joke?" called out Paul.

"This don't pay," returned the clergyman.

"Why, George," said Mrs. Brentwell anxiously, "what is it?"

"This sermon is the most confused thing I ever wrote. I have the gist of about everything you said last night in it. Read it, Horatio."

And as Horatio read, the tears of the family were changed into laughter; for it was a ludicrous mixture of home talk and sermonizing.

"I am very sorry," said Mrs. Brentwell.

"I'll never speak another word while father writes his sermons," said Christie.

"What will you preach to-day?" Daisy asked.

"What is left of this."

"Oh, don't!" cried Paul. "I'll split, if you do." The church bell began to toll in its highest key. "Ding-dong, ding-dong," squeaked Paul, at the top of his voice.

"Is that becoming, my dear?" asked his mother. He could not say that it was, and would not say that it

was not. So he replied by enlisting her sympathies in his behalf.

“My gloves are torn, too,” he said.

“Run, Herbert,” Mr. Brentwell said, “and get my surplice from the church ; and if you are ready to go, you can carry it for me.”

“You are covered with ashes, Paul,” said Daisy ; “what have you been doing ?”

“I only blew a little into the cat’s eyes.” Daisy brushed and turned the restless little body. “Hurry up, there ; that kitten’s got my cap. Let me go.”

Mrs. Brentwell’s bonnet was tied on tight, and straightened by every one of her daughters, and her shawl drawn over her shoulders in forty wrinkles.

Paul started off on a trot ; Mr. Brentwell went down the street thinking of his sermon ; Daisy and Horatio walked slowly on together. Mrs. Brentwell and the twin sisters were the last to leave the house. As they walked down the street she improved the occasion by talking in a gentle way of the uncertainty of life, illustrating her discourse by the sudden end of Dr. Doreann. They came up with Horatio and Daisy at the door, and entered the parlor with them. Paul, seated alone upon the edge of the sofa, was the prominent figure in the room. His hair was plastered down closer than ever ; and the expression of his face was a combination of awe, solemnity and importance ; he appeared to feel that he was the funeral. He had been telling a boy outside that

his father was going to preach the "bulliest kind of a sermon ; it would make 'em all laugh."

Daisy almost laughed in his face, and in the face of all the assembled company, when she saw his unusual gravity, and his cat-in-a-strange-garret appearance. And she seated herself beside him, that he might not figure in such painfully bold relief to the next arrival.

"Every body is coming," he said, in a boy whisper ;
"Tom Borne says his father is."

"Don't talk so loud," said Daisy softly.

"I ain't talking loud ; I'm whispering."

"I didn't know it."

Lestie, who was seated near, leaned over. "Mother has got her bonnet all crooked again," she said.

"So she has. Do tell Christie—oh, you can't make her hear."

"I can," said Paul, obligingly ; and, putting his hand on the side of his mouth, he whispered a short—"Christie."

Every head turned. There was a solemn silence. Solemn old eyes looked upon the young scapegrace with horror. But he saw it not ; he was too intent upon being obliging.

"The girls—" he continued.

"Do hush," interrupted "the girls."

Horatio left his seat and came to them.

"If you don't know how to behave yourself," he said to Paul, "you may go home."

"I won't do it for you," returned Paul, almost out

loud ; then, louder—"The girls wanted me to tell Christie that mother's bonnet is crooked ; it's knocked all to the side of her head."

The solemn eyes came heavily down upon Mrs. Brentwell's bonnet. The poor lady put her hand helplessly to it, and Christie, who sat next to her, straightened it, and tied the strings once more—tighter this time.

Mr. Brentwell now came in, vested in his robes, and took his stand in the door between the office and parlor ; and Paul assumed his funeral air again—this time to the great relief of the anxious family.

The service at the house consisted simply of the Twenty-third Psalm, a few collects and a hymn. When that was over, the neighbors filed into the sitting-room, where the body was upon exhibition. Very few had gathered at the house, for, knowing that it was only a small place, they anticipated a crowd. But the usual village corpse-viewers were there. The "village corpse-viewers" are persons whom we all have met. They make it a part of their life-work to attend every funeral that is held in the place ; and, being zealous in their work, they begin with viewing the body as soon as it is laid out, view it again at the funeral in the house, and finally join the single file procession around the coffin in the church.

There was a small procession from the house to the church. Mr. Brentwell walked at the head in his robes. He was not thinking at all—wicked man !—of the suddenness of death, and all the solemn things he should

have been meditating upon at such a time. No, indeed ; he was thinking of the low state of the wood-pile, and of how badly his wife needed a new shawl, and of the various darns in his own best coat. To be sure, it did occur to him that Dr. Doreann was dead, but, at the same time, he remembered that the doctor had gone where the wood-piles never grew low, and where there were no shabby shawls or darned coats to contend with. A little distance behind, Mrs. Brentwell, forgetful of the diminishing wood-pile, ignorant of the shabbiness of her shawl, and confident in the efficacy of the darns in her husband's coat, walked between Herbert and Paul, and devoted her time and thoughts solely to keeping them quiet. Lestie and Christie came next and then Daisy and Horatio. The family party separated at the church door : Horatio, Christie and Lestie went into the choir, where the former played the organ, and the two latter sang ; Mrs. Brentwell, with the others, went to their own pew.

The church was crowded to overflowing ; the whole village was pressed into it. The young and the old, the scoffing and the earnest, the rich and the poor, were there as mourners. There was scarcely a dry eye in the whole assembly when the coffin containing the body of their universal friend was carried in, and placed before the railing. Two old ladies robed in black tottered in after it—his only living relative, and she who should have been yet nearer to him than that beloved sister. The large portion of Newfield which was gathered in St.

Paul's forgot—really forgot—their tears in wondering who Miss Nettie's companion was. Curiosity, after all, is the leading trait in human nature. Miss Nettie and her unknown friend sat alone in the mourners' pew, listening tearlessly to the sobs which burst forth from the congregation.

The beautiful service proceeded. The outer doors had been closed, and several solemn-minded pillars of the church, who had not been able to obtain seats, were leaning peacefully against them when they were suddenly pushed open, throwing the solemn pillars into each other's arms, and an old man walked in—Sam Lukens. He paid no attention to the confusion that his entrance caused, but hobbled up the aisle to the coffin, seeing nothing but the long casket that contained the body of his only friend.

The congregation stared and wondered. The undertaker and surviving warden simultaneously rose to eject him as he stood fingering the lid of the coffin, evidently trying to unscrew it. Miss Nettie, equally forgetful that the eyes of the crowded church were upon her, leaned over the front of the pew, and touched his dirty sleeve with her old white hand. He turned; the scowl, with which he would have greeted another, faded away, and he looked almost kindly on her haggard face. She whispered softly to him, and, seemingly in compliance with her request, he entered the pew, and sat down beside her. And they—those three—sat side by side. Was there ever a stranger group?

Sam Lukens in church ! The warden and undertaker sank back into their seats, without removing their eyes from him. And the warden wiped his glasses three or four times before he discovered that they were not the true offenders, and that his eyes were growing misty. Mr. Brentwell was really alarmed, when he considered the great responsibility of preaching before Sam Lukens, and bethought him of several sermons, now at home, which would have produced a much more powerful effect upon the hardened sinner. But Mr. Brentwell might have quieted his alarms ; Sam would not have heard the blast of the Angel Gabriel's trumpet, if it had been sounded in his ears at that moment. The boys, occupying the front pews of the gallery, looked on in the deepest concern. What if the old creature should see them, and recognize them before their parents ? Paul, who sat just behind him, shook in his shoes, and made up his wavering mind that he would never go near the horrid hut again ; he'd see it hanged first ! But nothing was further from Sam's mind than greeting his young disciples ; he did not see them.

When the service was concluded, the undertaker stepped up to the coffin, and proceeded, in accordance with the established but mistaken custom still in vogue, to unscrew the lid, that the assembled people should take their last look at the corpse. And Mr. Brentwell gave directions which aisle they should walk up, and which one they should walk down. Miss Nettie shuddered as the curious villagers pressed eagerly forward, and jostled

one another in their haste to see her dead brother's face. As the last one was stepping reluctantly away, Sam went forward, and gazed for one moment on the calm face, that seemed to reflect some of the peace into which the soul had entered. The old man turned, and walked slowly out of the church, with the same stony look. There was a crowd at the door, but it quickly parted for him to pass through.

That afternoon a few boys—who had not been at the funeral—knocked in vain at the door of his hut. Sam was not receiving calls that afternoon; nor did he have open house again for a week or more.

CHAPTER V.

“Like the worthy of Uz, Heaven prosper’d his piety.
The leader of every religious society.
Christian knowledge he labored through life to promote
With personal profit, and knew how to quote
Both the stocks and the Scripture with equal advantage
To himself and admiring friends in this Cant—age.”

—OWEN MEREDITH.

THE funeral was over. Mrs. Brentwell and her daughters had just entered the house, when Paul burst in, and announced that his father wanted them immediately.

“What does he want with us?” Lestie asked crossly.

“We’re all to go to Dr. Doreann’s right off; and you must hurry; they’re waiting outside.”

Daisy looking out of the window, saw Herbert and Horatio each sitting upon a stile. “Father is not here,” she said. “He’s gone with Miss Nettie.”

“I don’t know why we are going,” said Mrs. Brentwell, wonderingly.

“I don’t want to go, I’m sure,” said Lestie, pettishly. “We’ll just sit round that dull old room, and look solemn. And Paul will act as he did at the funeral. I never was so ashamed in my life as I was then. Every body looked at us.”

“Well, you said mother’s bonnet was on crooked,

and you wanted Christie to know it. So I told her. I thought you were in earnest. How was I to know you were fibbing?"

"There, there, dears, don't say any more. You meant for the best, my son; only it wasn't right to talk aloud at such an occasion. Don't do it again, dear."

"No, ma'am."

"Why are we going to Dr. Doreann's?" Mrs. Brentwell inquired of her sons, when they joined them in the yard.

"The doctor's will is to be read," said Horatio; "and father said that we must be present." About twenty persons were assembled in the little parlor when they entered. Miss Nettie was seated by one of the windows, talking in low tones to the stranger, who had been her companion in the church. Mother Wade, who was still conductor of ceremonies, hastened to meet the party from the rectory, and provided them with seats. Then she seated herself on the sofa by Mrs. Brentwell.

"I never did hear such a power of a sermon," she said, in doleful tones, holding a cotton handkerchief to her eyes, "as the elder preached to-day. It went right to the bottom of my heart; and I looked over to Crissy Wells an' Mis' March to see them swaller it down—they needed it, I know. I wanted to give the elder a poke, to hammer it down harder on 'em. An' I felt like clappin' my hands, an' sayin'—'You hear that, over there?' when he says, says he, 'Them talkers is the ones that'll have to look at that latter day, them long-tongued

critters what are alwa's havin' something to say agin their neighbors! An' Mis' March was lookin' over to me, and noddin' her head; but I thought it was no time to recognize folks; she'd better be enlistening to the sermon; so I jest looked away, and felt like pokin' the elder agin. There ain't nothing goin' that Mis' March don't have up, and tell all over town. T'other day I heerd she was talkin' about my Tom, and sayin' that he was the worst young feller in Newfield, all the while she knows she's lyin'. Oh, I'd scorn to tell how I've seen her Phil reeling home."

"Oh, my!" gasped Mrs. Brentwell; "I hope that is not true."

"No; I don't tell no one; I scorn it: I'm above talkin' agin my neighbors. If I ever let anything drop, kind o' unawares, you know, folks knows that it is true as gospel. There's Mis' Moore now, what lives next door to me, there ain't a soul as knows when she's fibbin' and when she ain't. I was sayin' to Jane this morning that I'd come down and ask the elder to preach agin lying, an' take that 'ere text in Scripture—'The liar sha'n't have no portion,' an' you'd see if it wouldn't make a few o' the liars in Newfield think of their latter end. There's Mis' March now, she's always talkin' o' her portion; I'd like her to find out that she won't git none, if she don't mend her ways. I think it would do her good; and I feel as if I couldn't do enough good for my feller-bein's. I don't suppose the elder knows anything about the wickedness of this 'ere world—dear, innocent

man. As I was tellin' Jane this morning, there ain't no one like the parson for bein' innocent; you could just cheat him out o' his shirt, and he'd give you his flannels right along with it."

"Dear me, no! he would catch cold."

"Jest what I telled my Jane. 'Jane!' I says, says I, 'I jest feel sometimes as if Mis' Brentwell had an awful responsibility in takin' care o' that man.'"

"He takes care of me," interposed the wife.

"Now the doctor's gone" (wiping her eyes vigorously), "I don't see what'll become o' nobody. Poor man" (with a deep sigh), his day had come. We must all be prepared when our time comes. I was sayin' to Jane this morning, 'Jane,' says I, 'now the doctor's gone, there ain't no knowin' who'll go next; I don't feel safe a minute.' But Jane ain't no professor, an' she don't think on solemn things, like as I; so she says, says she, 'Law, marm, I ain't afeard.'"

Mr. Brentwell now entered the parlor, accompanied by the lawyer. Mr. Calfort was a Baptist deacon of high standing, and the main counsellor of the village. He was strong in his opinions, and had firm faith in two things: himself and the Baptist doctrines; and he was *the* man, among the Baptists in Newfield; he selected the minister, called him, and finally sent him away. So it was on his right side that the divines endeavored to remain during their usually short sojourn in the place. He was a small, nervous man, with quick, energetic motions, and spoke in a high, irritating, dictatorial key.

He had fallen into the queer habit of rubbing the back of his head when he was excited, and had rubbed the hair off, leaving two rows of short hairs just back of his ears, which had the appearance of whiskers behind ; and, considering that he wore none in front, they were quite an item in his make-up. He was dressed in a brown frock coat, flowered vest, and loose, greenish pantaloons. He wore an enormous neck-cloth of muslin ; and his collar, on account of not being too low, had a disagreeable way scraping his chin, which had gotten him into the habit of shaking his head backward every two minutes or less, by his own large silver watch.

Horatio arose as they entered, gave his chair to his father, and leaned up against the mantel-piece in an unconsciously graceful attitude, to the admiration of Daisy ; and Horatio was at that age when he would rather be admired by her than by any one else's sister.

Mr. Calfort stationed himself between the two front windows, and rapped upon the little table beside him to enforce perfect quiet in the already silent room. As the knock effected no visible change, he stamped upon the floor with one of his delicately gaitered feet, cleared his throat, and threw his head back. This had the desired effect ; it caused Paul to whisper impatiently to Christie, who sat next to him. "Why don't he begin ?"

"Silence, young man !" cried Mr. Calfort, in his most terrible tone, knocking again on the table. "Silence !"

Mr. Brentwell's eyes snapped in true fatherly wrath,

and he opened his mouth, but, being a prudent man, he shut it again, before a sound escaped.

Mr. Calfort, with a satisfied air, now unrolled the parchment he held in his hand, and, giving his head a final throw, began the reading of Dr. Doreann's will. The doctor bequeathed to his successor in the practice, whoever he might be, his horse and gig, and all things pertaining to them; to Sam Lukens he gave his large Bible and Prayer Book, and to his friend the Rev. George D. Brentwell, the sum of one hundred dollars. All that remained was left to Miss Nettie, for life, and at her death, the house and lot were to be sold, and, together with the money already at interest, to be placed in a reliable bank, where the interest should be drawn semi-annually, and be paid to the Rector of St. Paul's, in addition to his salary.

Mr. Calfort laid the will down in solemn silence, knocking on the table to intimate that he desired the present quiet of the room to continue. He looked gravely over his glasses at Paul, who sat on the same chair with Herbert, at the extreme end of the room, with open mouth and staring eyes. The boy had forgotten his late mortification in the astonishment the legacy left to his father caused; and the small sum seemed a vast fortune to him.

Mr. Calfort stamped one foot again, jerked back his head, and unrolled another piece of parchment. He paused to blow his nose in a white silk handkerchief, and to wipe his eyes.

"I will now read a short codicil," he said, when all this was properly done.

The codicil was merely to bequeath to Mrs. Millie S. Lorraine a little black mahogany box, the key of which was in his wallet.

The stranger, who sat by Miss Nettie, turned quickly, and seemed surprised at this; and then the assembly knew that she was Mrs. Lorraine; but they were but little wiser than before; for no one knew who "Mrs. Lorraine" was.

There was a moment of silence, then every tongue broke loose and Mr. Calfort knew that his reign was over: he felt that the sceptre had departed; but, making the best of matters, he strutted over to a gentleman who was standing by the office door—a Mr. James Lute—and began a conversation with him, talking in his usual shrill tones, while Mr. Lute replied from the very depths of his deep bass lungs.

A meek looking man in shabby black approached Mr. Brentwell.

"Allow me to congratulate you, sir," he said, holding out his thin white hand, while a sickly smile spread over his starved looking face and then faded quickly away.

"Thank you, Mr. Borne. It *was* a very acceptable donation."

"So I judged, sir; so I judged." (Another sickly smile.) "Great man," he continued, in a low tone, indicating Mr. Calfort by a motion of his bony finger. "A great man; a fine lawyer."

“Y-e-es,” said Mr. Brentwell, doubtfully.

“He wrote that will, and it was a splendidly gotten up thing,” Mr. Borne went on enthusiastically; “’twas a most touching composition.”

“It touched me,” replied Mr. Brentwell smiling, regardless of the solemnity of the occasion.

Mr. Borne sighed heavily, then suddenly recollecting himself he essayed another feeble smile.

This gentleman was the Rev. Mr. Borne, the Baptist clergyman, and consequently was in great anxiety at all times to stand well in Mr. Calfort’s favor, which was not always easy to do. And the lawyer was already determining in his own mind what measures he should pursue to send him away, and had decided to propose at the next “church-meeting,” that the liberal salary of six hundred a year, which Mr. Borne was now starving upon, should be reduced to four hundred dollars. Mr. Borne had an inkling that a storm was brewing, and was doing his poor best to conciliate this great man.

“I hope Mrs. Calfort is well,” was Mr. Borne’s anxious greeting, grasping the lawyer’s hand as he came to them.

“She is, I thank you,” returned Mr. Calfort with great pomposity.

“And all the children, the dear lambs?”

“My family are all well, I thank you,” squeaked Mr. Calfort, in awful tones. Mr. Borne trembled and was silent.

“Mr. Brentwell,” said Mr. Calfort, addressing that

gentleman with the air of one who has a momentous question to propound, "Mr. Brentwell, I believe that Mr. Lincoln, the Presbyterian minister, and our own pastor, Mr. Borne, were both at the funeral of our lamented friend and physician."

"I believe they were."

"May I be permitted to ask why they were not invited into your pulpit?"

"I hope Mr. Borne will not be offended if I tell the reason plainly."

"Oh, no, sir," said that gentleman.

"No ; Mr. Borne will not be offended," said Mr. Calfort determinedly, as if he had said, "*I shall not allow Mr. Borne to be offended.*"

"Then, sir, I did not invite Mr. Borne and Mr. Lincoln into the chancel because they have never received what our church considers a valid ordination."

"Sir !" said the great, but astonished man ; "sir, do I hear aright, or do my ears deceive me?"

Mr. Lute, who was a vestry-man of St. Paul's, was guilty of a quiet smile.

"Mr. Calfort," said Mr. Brentwell, "allow me to explain to you at some future time."

"I want no explanation," returned Mr. Calfort excitedly, beginning to rub the bald spot : "I wish to hear no more on the subject ; never again, sir. Mr. Borne, what do you say of this?"

"I have heard it before," said Mr. Borne evasively.

"Then why was I not informed of it ? Have things

come to this pass and *I* not told of it? What am I to think of it?"

"Softly," said Mr. Lute, placing his large hand on the little man's shoulder; "no one is to blame that you have kept yourself in ignorance."

"If that is ignorance, then in ignorance I shall remain; for I will hear no more of it."

Mr. Brentwell, wishing the gentlemen a "good afternoon," separated himself from the group, leaving Mr. Borne to congratulate Mr. Calfort on the fine composition of the will, and to inquire for the tenth time after Mrs. Calfort and the dear lambs.

Mrs. Brentwell was gathering up her children to depart. The room had been cold, and Daisy was shivering.

"Don't be gettin' sick, when we hain't no doctor," Mrs. Wade said to her. "I was sayin' to Jane this morning, 'Jane,' says I, 'jist like enough Daisy'll be took with a spell o' lungs, now the poor dear doctor is dead.' 'Marm,' says she, 'I'm afeard she will.' My sakes! what would we do? Mis' Brentwell, you can't take too good care of her; for she's a poor, weak critter, at the best, and likely to blow away and die at any wind. Jest look out for them lung spells. I was sayin' to Jane this morning, 'Jane,' says I, 'I'm just surprised all the time to think that Daisy Brentwell is alive yet. Every time fall comes,' says I, 'I'm a thinkin' it'll be her last.' 'Marm,' says Jane, says she, 'I think so, too.' Death ain't nothin' if you're only prepared when the

summons comes. If you're prepared to die you can't go too soon. What's 'arth for? It's a sorrowin' vale for poor mortals to prepare in ; that's all. Keep your latter end in view, an' you're all right. Here I am preachin' to you. I was tellin' Jane this morning that I was cut out for a parson. 'Marm,' says she, 'I believe you was.' Take care o' them spells now."

"What does that old woman mean by talking that way?" Horatio said indignantly, when they were outside of the door. "It's enough to kill Daisy to hear her."

"She meant well," returned the mother, smothering the sigh that came from her heart.

"If she talks any more about Daisy's dying," said Paul savagely, "I'll upset her."

CHAPTER VI.

“Oh! poverty is a weary thing :
‘Tis full of grief and pain ;
It beareth down the heart of man,
And dulls his cunning brain.”

—MARY HOWITT.

“Ask, and it shall be given you.”

IT was twilight at the rectory. The supper table was laid in the sitting-room, with snowy cloth and napkins, glittering white dishes and a little plain glassware. The only silver upon it was a few spoons : one of Mrs. Brentwell’s wedding gifts. There were freshly cut bread and golden butter, cold meat, a dish of baked apples, and home-made cakes. That was all, but it was an inviting meal.

Mrs. Brentwell sat in her rocking-chair by the fire, and the children were gathered around her, sitting on low chairs and on the floor, watching the firelight and talking over the occurrences of the day as they awaited Mr. Brentwell’s coming. He had not yet returned since the reading of the will.

“What did you think, mother,” Herbert was earnestly asking, “when he read out, ‘And to my friend the Rev. George D. Brentwell.’”

“*I* thought,” cried Paul, “that he was going to say the old gig.”

“He left that to the next physician,” said Lestie.

“And it was a very sensible idea,” said Horatio, who had always entertained a great respect for all of the doctor’s acts; “for without doubt his successor will be a poor young man unable to buy one.” He sighed as he spoke.

“Oh, Horatio!” Daisy said, throwing her arms around her favorite brother’s neck, “don’t sigh; you *will* be a physician yet.”

“But, mother, I say,” persisted Herbert, “what did you think when he began to read about father?”

“I heard what he had to say before I had time to make any conjectures,” returned Mrs. Brentwell smiling.

“Well, *I* conjectured,” said Lestie; “for it seemed to me that he stopped a full minute just there; and I thought it would be those satin dresses that Miss Nettie showed me once, that she used to wear; at least, I hoped so.”

“Oh! Lestie,” cried her sisters.

“Well, I’m mighty glad you were disappointed,” said Paul, unfeelingly.

“A few old dresses wouldn’t have been worth a hundred dollars to us,” said Herbert.

“I thought of the best thing I could,” explained Lestie.

“You needn’t have thought of anything,” said Christie; “I didn’t.”

“Mother,” said Daisy suddenly, “you’ll get a new

bonnet now, won't you? You've worn that old one four winters."

"Yes," cried Lestie; "and I am going to have a dress like Lou Wartel's."

"A hundred dollars!" said Paul, meditatively, poking the fire with a stick he held in his hand. "Mother, ain't it being awful rich to own a hundred dollars? I don't believe Mr. Van Pike has got more'n fifty." Allow me to remark here, as an insight to Paul's character, that he was a firm believer in the bag of gold at the end of the rainbow. He held the lighted stick up before his face while he waited anxiously for a reply.

Horatio and Herbert laughed at the question. Daisy took the burning stick from his hands.

"Don't do that again, Paul," said Mrs. Brentwell; "you'll set the house on fire."

"We can't afford to burn up the old thing yet," laughed Herbert.

"Not until the interest accumulates a little at least," added Horatio.

"Well, ain't it rich?" persisted Paul.

"No, it is not," said Daisy.

"But we never had so much money at one time before, did we?"

"No, Paul," replied Mrs. Brentwell, a little sadly. There was a momentary silence; every one was occupied with their own thoughts. Mrs. Brentwell was going back over the years of toil and privation, spent with her husband and children—happy years; for there was

around her an unbroken band. What wealth could buy them ? and during the years had she not learned the one invaluable lesson of self-forgetting ?

Horatio, looking sadly into the fire, was remembering self wonderfully. He was thinking of the legacy, and the disappointment it had been to him ; for he had hoped, and really expected that the doctor would leave him a few, at the least, of his medical books. In vain he upbraided himself for his selfishness, and brought to his mind the fact, that though the books were worth five or six times the sum of money, which had been left—these would have been valuable only to himself. But still, of what use were they to Miss Nettie ? and the next physician would certainly have a library of his own. Horatio was growing despondent very fast ; and Daisy, wondering what she might do to draw his thoughts from himself unconsciously did the very thing ; she burst into a violent fit of coughing.

“ Oh ! Daisy,” he cried, almost reproachfully, “ why *do* you cough so ? ”

“ She has caught a fresh cold to-day,” said Mrs. Brentwell anxiously.

“ Do you take the cough medicine now ? ”

“ It’s gone,” gasped Daisy.

“ And the doctor is dead,” said Christie, despairingly. Daisy lay back, weak and exhausted, in Horatio’s arms.

“ Mother,” said Herbert, “ I’ll tell you what we’ll do ; we’ll take that hundred dollars and send Daisy away to get well.”

“That’s just what we’ll do,” said Christie.

“Yes, mother,” said Horatio, forgetting himself and his own great needs.

“I should think,” Paul wisely observed, “that Horatio knew enough to cure her himself.”

“If I only did.”

“Maybe,” said Christie, “the next doctor will know so much more than Dr. Doreann that he will soon make her well.”

“I haven’t the least doubt of it,” said Mrs. Brentwell hopefully.

Horatio was of a different opinion ; he had always thought that to know more than Dr. Doreann had known, was an impossibility.

“I am not sick, mother,” Daisy said, hoarsely ; “it is only a little cold such as I’ve had a hundred times.”

Yes, a “hundred times” all in one long cold. The words went down into the mother’s heart as she remembered when this began, and the fruitless efforts they made to check it.

Similar thoughts were passing through Lestie’s mind as she sat silent. Daisy was always sick ! She always had been, and never gave any one else a chance ! No matter how much *she* coughed or was hoarse, no one cared ; and even Christie didn’t pity her, and Christie would pity the cat if he was sick ! Very cross looks came over her face as she thought on her trials, which were unnoticed by any but Paul. He was stretched out at full length on the floor behind her. Her long

hair was temptingly near his hand, and he gave it a violent jerk.

“Paul Brentwell, stop! You little torment!”

“What’ll I stop? I ain’t doing anything.”

Another pull.

“Mother, he’s pulling my hair out by the handfuls. Make him stop.”

“That’s a whopper. I wish father’d come.”

“I wonder what keeps him,” said Christie rising and feeling the hands of the clock. “It is half-past six now.”

Another scream from Lestie, at which Horatio put Paul out into the kitchen.

“I’ll pay you for that,” cried Paul, springing up and doubling his fists; “see if I don’t.”

“Paul,” said Mrs. Brentwell gently, “go sit in that chair in the corner until you can make up your mind to be a good boy.”

The child obeyed: there was no appeal when mother spoke. Mrs. Brentwell was not one of those women who betray their weakness to their children by threats of telling their father of their misconduct; her word was sufficient. So Mr. Brentwell never knew one-hundreth part of the bringing up of the children. His wife never came to him with petty complaints of this one’s disobedience or that one’s sauciness, nor spoke of the trial they were to her at times, nor begged his interference: the manifold cares of the parish were his burden and the household cares hers.

Herbert was always pained when Paul was in trouble, and Christie sighed over his sins ; but Lestie muttered "good," between her teeth. It was intended only for Paul to hear, but it fell upon her mother's ears as well.

"Are you really glad that he is punished, Lestie?" she said.

Lestie did not reply immediately ; she was somewhat taken back by the directness of the question. "He pulled my hair awfully," she muttered at length.

"Are you glad that I punished him for doing so?"

"Of course she is," growled Paul from his chair ; "I'd be glad if she was sitting in the other corner."

"I do not want you to speak, my son. Lestie, did you say you were glad?"

Lestie *was* glad ; the punishment had rejoiced her exceedingly : it was eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth—not to mention a hair for a hair—between the two children, and Mrs. Brentwell knew it but too well.

"You are sorry, ain't you, Lestie?" said Christie ; "we all are."

"I ain't," came from the dark corner, where tears were beginning to flow freely.

"*You* are sorry, of course," said Lestie ; "he didn't pull your hair."

This answered Mrs. Brentwell's question.

"My child," she said, gravely, "have you become so completely absorbed in your own selfish little feelings that it has taken away all love for your little brother?"

"No, ma'am."

“I fear you have. The annoyance that he caused you, you rejoice to see paid back in full. Have you so soon forgotten our Saviour’s prayer for His enemies, when He was on the cross?”

“No ma’am.”

“Then tell me what it was.”

“‘Father forgive them; for they know not what they do,’” Lestie jerked out, thinking it a very unparallel case, for Paul had known just what he did.

“Would He have prayed in that manner,” continued Mrs. Brentwell, “if He had not forgiven them already Himself?”

“No, ma’am,” faintly.

“Then if you had forgiven Paul the instant he pulled your hair, would you not have begged me not to send him to that corner, instead of rejoicing that I did?”

Lestie made no reply; she was quite beyond doing so.

“Tell me this one thing, dear,” her mother went on gently; “do you not think that it is possible for our Saviour to forgive Paul for pulling your hair?”

“Yes, ma’am,” amid sobs.

“Then can’t you do so when One so holy and mighty does?”

“Oh! I do, mother; but he don’t want me to.”

“Mother,” from the corner, “I’m sorry I pulled her hair; may I come back?”

“Yes, Paul.”

The impulsive boy ran to his mother and threw his arms around her neck.

"Tell Lestie so," she whispered.

He went to his tearful sister and gave her a boy hug, unconsciously pulling her hair much harder than before; but she, unmindful of it, returned the caress with equal fervor, while Christie, made very happy by this act, embraced them both, and wept tears of joy at their timely repentance.

At that moment the gate was heard to shut, and a well-known step came up the walk.

"There is father," Herbert joyfully announced. Christie left off weeping and caressing and lit the lamp, while Mrs. Brentwell, hastened to make the tea, and Daisy, who had been lying upon the settee for some time past, sat up. She did not want her father to think she was ill.

The clergyman came home, as he always did, to a happy family circle. All signs of the recent storm had passed: there were smiles to greet him when he entered.

He gave his hat and cloak to Herbert, who was in waiting, and seated himself by the fire.

"It's a cold night for March," he said, warming his hands by the blaze.

"Are you ready for supper?" said Mrs. Brentwell. "We've been waiting for you."

"There'll be skating to-morrow, Herb," shouted Paul. "Hurrah! I'm glad o' that. I was afraid we'd had our last."

"So am I glad," chimed Lestie. "I want to show Lou Wartel that I can skate backward better'n she can."

"It is late," Mr. Brentwell said, glancing at the clock. "I have been with Miss Nettie all this time. She is sorely afflicted, Maria."

"Indeed she is," returned Mrs. Brentwell.

"She is entirely alone now; the old lady who was with her at the funeral has gone."

"Who was she?" Lestie asked.

"Mrs. Lorraine."

"She was Miss Millie Stout," Daisy said.

"Why, how hoarse you are," cried her father, anxiously.

"She had a hard coughing spell a little while ago," Christie explained. And Horatio taking up the subject of his sister's ill-health, enlarged upon it, urging that "something must be done," and that something right soon.

"Father," said Paul, when they were seated at the table, "we've been planning what we'll do with the money."

"I am under the necessity of deciding that question myself," Mr. Brentwell said, simply.

"Why?" "How?" "What are you going to do with it?" "Why, father!" were the exclamations of the surprised group.

"I shall now be able to pay some bills that I owe," he returned.

"Why, George, I know of no large bills."

"There are no large ones, but quite a number of small ones, which altogether amount to over seventy-five

dollars. I have not spoken of them because I did not want to trouble any of you ; and I knew that God would send the money in His own good time, if I waited with faith and patience."

"And so He has," said Christie softly.

The last vestige of the medical books disappeared from Horatio's hopes ; Christie and Herbert gave up Daisy's journey, and with it, her health ; and Daisy herself relinquished bright plans of a new parlor carpet. Lestie pouted as her dreams of gay dresses were thus rudely dispelled. Paul, who had no settled plans, only that the money must be spent, was the first to speak.

"We were going to buy dresses," he said, "and send Daisy off to get well with what was left."

"I was not going," said Daisy, hoarsely.

"Something must be done for you," returned Mr. Brentwell. "I am hoping that the next physician will be able to help you. And as for the dresses in which you are so interested, Paul, there will be over twenty dollars left for spring clothes."

Lestie clapped her hands ; she would have her dresses after all.

"Remember you need a new hat, my dear," said Mrs. Brentwell.

"I'm not likely to forget that."

Horatio sat silent during the short evening that followed ; Daisy and the boys retired early, and the others sat around the fire determining what wonderful articles of wearing apparel should be purchased with the few re-

maining dollars. As the clock struck the hour of nine, Horatio bade them good night, and went up stairs. Christie, going to her own room half an hour later, saw through the half-open door that he had not yet retired, but lay dressed upon the bed. She hastened in.

“Horatio, what is the matter? Why haven’t you gone to bed? Dear me! you are as cold as ice.” She drew a quilt over him and sat down on the bed. His face was buried in the pillow, but she took it gently in her hands and raised it to the light, and saw that his cheeks were wet and the pillow was damp.

“Oh! Christie,” he said, a little impatiently, “I was asleep. Why did you waken me?”

“Because you were catching your death of cold.”

“I hope I have,” he returned quickly.

“Why do you talk that way?”

“Because I feel it. Why should I want to live? I have no object in life, and here I am a burden and expense on father; and there’s no way in which I can earn a single cent—even to buy a few books.

“Books! Why father has plenty of books for you to read.”

“I mean medical books to study. Oh! Christie, I was getting along so well with Dr. Doreann; every day he said something about my rapid progress, and I think, that in another year he would have taken me into partnership; but here I am thrown back again without a book or a cent. I do wish sometimes that I was dead—I wish so now.” He buried his face in the pillow again.

“Don’t talk that way, dear brother ; it is so wrong.”

“I can’t help it if it is : I’m awful wicked anyway. How much happier you’d all be if I were dead and put out of the way ! I worry all of you the whole time ; mother begins to look sad the minute I come in sight. I do wish I was out of everybody’s way.”

“Don’t say that, Horatio ; you’ll break my heart,” Christie said, winding her arms around his neck. “I believe we would all die if you did. Indeed I am sometimes afraid that you will be taken because we almost worship you.”

“What nonsense !” he said as he returned her caress. “If I’m taken at all it’ll be because I’m such an idle, good-for-nothing fellow.”

“ ‘ They also serve who only stand and wait,’ ” softly quoted Christie.

“I’m so selfish,” he went on. “Do you know, Christie, when we were talking of the legacy that the Doctor left, and the children were saying what they wished it had been, that I was thinking how disappointed I was.”

“Why, what have you wanted it to be ? We needed money so much.”

“I know it ; and that’s just the worst part of my selfishness, Christie. I wanted the doctor’s books.”

He whispered it into her ear ; for it was a great secret, and one which would never be confided to any one but Christie. Hers was one of those rare natures which are always confided in ; one so sympathizing, so unselfish and loving that the cares of others were her own.

We find these natures as by intuition, and when they are found we confide in them, pouring our dearest, closest-treasured secrets into their ear ; and when it is told we receive comfort and sympathy, and know that there is *one* in the whole width and breadth of the land who understands us, our motives, and our acts ; and that is a great deal to know, that there is one among all the millions—one sympathizing heart—to know us as we know ourselves.

Every one in St. Paul's Rectory confided in Christie. Secret gifts, little surprises and secret griefs were told her by father, mother, brothers and sisters. Mr. Brentwell, alone in the study, told her when the money was falling short, the needs that never would be supplied, the discouragements and trials of the parish which he mercifully kept from his wife. Mrs. Brentwell held many a secret consultation with her in the kitchen about the manner in which they should make the ends meet, reform Paul, pay Herbert's school-bill, or cure Daisy. So she stood as a shield between her two parents, receiving their cares and burdens, and bearing them. But not alone. Who would bear a burden when an elder Brother has offered to take it upon Himself ? What man travelling over a weary plain will jealously carry a crushing weight, when a Friend, a Brother, a Saviour offers to bear it for him ? Many do, many go through life sinking under care, yet refusing the aid, the strength, held out to them. But Christie did not refuse it ; gladly she availed herself of the promises, and committed all to Him.

Horatio's character was very different from his sisters : he must confide all of his feelings in some one, or, as he expressed it, die. And, generally speaking, our one great object in life is, after all, to preserve that life ; so Horatio, in spite of his former protestations to the contrary, had no idea of dying when he told Christie the whole sum of his trials.

She sat silent a moment before she replied. "I don't wonder that you want the books," she said, at length. "I had not thought of it before, though Horatio," she added, "I've been thinking of two things since you spoke ; and I want to tell you what they are before I go to bed. Are you sleepy ?"

"No. Go on ; what have you thought ?"

"Dr. Doreann was such an old man, you know," she said, "and practiced in such an old way—just as they did fifty years ago—that, perhaps, if you'd gone on studying with him, you would have learned wrong, and would have had to have studied it all over again. Now don't you think so ?"

"Not exactly," he said, smiling. "It might have occasioned me some inconvenience—yes, it's quite a consideration."

"We will look at it in that light any way," suggested Christie.

"What was your other idea ?"

"Oh ! the best one. The way you are to get not only the books to study, but some one to study with. We are to have faith in God."

“What has that to do with it?”

“Don’t you remember what father said at the supper table about the debts, and how he trusted in God and it all came right? Well, Horatio, you and I will both pray that you will get books and some one to study with; and then you *will* get them.”

“Why, do you believe, Christie, that God will hear a prayer about such a temporal thing as money?”

“Indeed I do. He will give us whatever we need; and He has made us to need money. He gave you the desire to become a physician, and He will provide the means. Trust Him; that is all He asks of you. He may try your faith a little; for He sometimes waits to see if we are really in earnest, and if we have true faith; but it will come in the end if we but ask of Him.”

“We will pray, Christie, and we will have faith—that is you will, I know, and I will try. You have comforted me so much, little sister.”

“Christie,” he added, suddenly, “what do you think of Daisy? Do you think that she is going to die?”

“I think that God will cure her.”

“Do you pray for it?”

“Indeed I do. I pray for it whenever I look toward her, whenever I hear her speak; and I know that father and mother and Herbert do, too.”

“But I think she will never get well.”

“Why Horatio?”

“I do, Christie; and it worries me almost to death.”

“But why do you? God will hear our prayers.”

“He may let her live a long time; but, Christie, I say Daisy will never be well.”

“When Dr. Doreann examined her lungs, he said they were not diseased.”

“I know; but they are very weak.”

“But God *can* cure her.”

“To be sure He can; but if He cured every one who is ill no one would ever die.”

“Horatio, who are you talking to?” asked a hoarse voice. A small ghostly looking figure stood beside them. It was Daisy, wrapped in a blanket from her bed.

“Oh, Daisy!” they cried in surprise, “what made you get up.”

“I heard Horatio talking to some one, and I came to see who it was.”

Horatio sprang up, and, lifting the slight form in his arms, carried her back to bed, while Christie followed to see that she was well covered.

Tranquil sleep descended upon the rectory; but one pair of eyes kept watch, one heart beat in its wakefulness. Christie lay thinking of Horatio and his troubles, long after he had sunk to slumber.

CHAPTER VII.

“With us there was a DOCTOR of PHYSIC ;
In all this world there was none him like
To speak of physic and of surgery.”

—CHAUCER.

ALL the leading topics in Newfield had been thoroughly discussed ; and not only discussed but worn thread-bare. Dr. Doreann's death and funeral had been talked over and over, and every feature of interest brought to light. Sam Lukens' unlooked for appearance had been a topic for some time, but all conjectures and investigations failing to bring the truth to light, it had been dropped, and the will—the contents of which were known by every one an hour after the reading—was next taken up, and not quite as soon disposed of : the clergyman's hundred dollars was something too wonderful to be overlooked in a day ; half the brains in Newfield were addled to decide how it should be spent, and every one agreed that it was a “handsome thing of the doctor.” Mrs. March hoped from her heart that the girls wouldn't be putting on airs, and that Mrs. Brentwell would have too much sense to be getting a “hired girl,” and such ; and on the Sunday following, some of the congregation were greatly disappointed upon seeing the ladies of the rectory in their old dresses,

when they had anticipated seeing them in velvet and silk attire.

But the legacy was forgotten and a new theme started : the next doctor ; who would he be ? At present the Fairhope physician was attending the ill in Newfield ; but there was one grand objection to him ; he was not always sober when he visited his patients, and temperance is quite a necessary item in a physician's make up ; and beside this he was not noted for his success in the art of healing, and it was almost certain death when he was the attending physician. So Fairhope was as much in need of the new doctor as Newfield was.

The only communication which the villagers held with the outer world, was by the means of a stage-coach, which rumbled along the quiet streets at four precisely every afternoon. And at this hour the windows of the houses by which it passed were well filled with curious heads, and one of the group always announced which coach it was—for the route was so long that there were two—and which driver.

It was an intensely cold day, about a week after the old doctor's funeral, when the stage came swaying along through the town with only two passengers inside. They were wrapped up to their eyes, and their hats—for they were both men—were drawn down to shield the upper part of the face. Long, curious looks followed them as they passed down the street : who *were* they ? Mother Wade sent her son Tom down to the tavern to see if

they went on to Fairhope, or if they alighted in Newfield ; and if they did stop in the village, at what place ; and, if possible, to learn who they were. He returned breathless in a short time, and reported the result of his investigations : one of them, he said, was Mr. Van Pike—a son of the gentleman who had so fortunately broken his arm long ago—the other one he did not know ; and they had both alighted at Miss Barker's. This bit of information Mrs. Wade hastened to tell her neighbors ; and they, one and all, agreed that Mr. Van Pike was putting on airs to wrap himself up so that no one could recognize him—it was not so cold as all that, they knew.

Miss Amelia Barker lived in the last house in Newfield. She was a maiden lady who supported herself by keeping boarders and doing plain sewing. She was short and fat and had been handsome in her young days—a fresh buxom beauty that does not fade soon. She was one of the few in Newfield who knew how to mind their own affairs, and she minded hers so well that the towns-people were kept in a state of perpetual anxiety and baffled curiosity concerning her doings.

Her sister-in-law boarded with her. Mrs. Mary Barker was the wife of an only and much beloved brother who had died some years before. She was the opposite of Miss Amelia in almost every respect. She was a great talker, and not being highly educated, her neighbors and their affairs were her topics. But she was a kind-hearted woman and bore no ill-will ; she would tell the

simple facts as she had heard them, and with fewer additions than many gave. She was not, like Miss Amelia, alone in the world ; she had a married daughter living in Philadelphia.

About two years before we write, a wealthy young merchant from that city had spent the summer in Newfield, boarding with Miss Barker, and he had fallen in love with the pretty face of the widow's daughter and married her immediately, taking her to his city home. She had made but two short visits to Newfield since, and she had then felt her station to be so far above that of the village people that they were not even permitted to see her.

Miss Amelia never told her sister-in-law anything that she did not want the whole village to know. And as she had *not* wanted the villagers to know of the two gentlemen who were to arrive that day, Mrs. Barker was as much astonished as any one in town, when the stage stopped before their door and they alighted. She had been stationed at one of the little front windows the whole day, and had been rewarded by the sight of three passers-by ; for, to her great sorrow, very few persons found it necessary to pass the little brown cottage. Every one of these persons was a subject of half an hour's conversation ; but all that could be said of them had been said, and she truly had been sitting quite silent for fifteen minutes or more when the stage drove up and the two gentlemen alighted. As they entered the gate Mr. Van Pike removed the scarf which had enveloped his face.

“ ‘Melie,’ she cried, “ ‘if there ain’t Mr. Van Pike and the handsomest young man you ever saw coming in our gate ; and Bill Toms is bringing in a trunk—it does beat all !”

Miss Amelia sprang up, dropping in her haste her spool and scissors, which the kitten immediately took charge of.

She opened the door in response to their loud knock.

“It is a cold day, ladies,” said Mr. Van Pike, as he greeted them.

“I knew it was,” responded Mrs. Barker eagerly ; “for there haven’t been but three persons by here to-day.”

Mr. Van Pike smiled ; he knew the widow’s weakness. “Miss Barker,” he said “our new physician, Dr. St. James.”

“I bid you welcome to such as I have,” said the little woman, holding out her hand to greet him.

“Thank you, Miss Barker,” he said, taking her hand, and bowing over it.

“And this,” continued Mr. Van Pike, turning to the widow, who listened with open-mouthed astonishment that the long-talked-of physician had actually come—and come to their house, “and this is Mrs. Barker.”

The doctor shook hands with her.

“Law sakes !” she cried. “It’s the new doctor : ‘Melie never said a word about it.”

“She didn’t ?” said Mr. Van Pike with well-feigned surprise.

“No ; she’s very close-mouthed.”

The overcoats, cloaks, scarfs, gloves and hats were at length removed, and Miss Amelia hastened to place comfortable chairs before the fire.

“You’re just frozen through, I know,” she said, “and as hungry as you can be.”

“I think we will plead guilty to both charges,” said Mr. Van Pike as he stretched his hands out before the cheerful blaze.

“I’ll get you a cup of tea and some of my gingerbread right away. It isn’t the best kind of cake, to be sure, but I hope you can eat it.”

Mr. Van Pike laughed as he thanked her.

She flitted out and in, bringing in the “gingerbread and tea,” in the shape of cold meat, cold cut tongue, stewed apples, preserved peaches, mince pies, fresh butter, snowy biscuits, and finally gingerbread.

“I was saying to ’Melie,” began Mrs. Barker, “that I believed it was the coldest day in the year, and that it keeps getting colder instead of warmer ; so that I’m afraid that we are not going to have any summer at all. But she was cheering me up and saying that it will certainly come. ’Melie’s always looking on the bright side o’ things, which I can’t do. Do you remember that time, Mr. Van Pike, when Deacon Lawson was going to sell our house away from us ? I just set to and had a good time crying and desponding ; but ’Melie didn’t give up a bit though we hadn’t a cent to pay the deacon. ‘Don’t be crying, Mary,’ says she ;

‘the Lord’s on our side, and He’ll never forsake the fatherless and widows, which we are!’ And sure enough, He didn’t. Some folks in the village raised money among them when they heard of it, and gave us enough to pay off all we owed on the house. ‘There,’ says she, ‘didn’t I tell you?’ And I said she did; I gave her the credit of that. But I hav’n’t any more faith in Deacon Lawson’s piety and long prayers. Many’s the time I’ve staid home from prayer-meeting for fear he’d pray, and he always does when he’s there. I don’t bear malice against him; but I don’t want anything to do with him. When his daughter Jane was married, and they sent us invitations to the wedding party, I says to ’Melie, ‘I won’t go, and that’s the end of it; don’t you be asking me to, either.’ And she didn’t. But when the night came round, I thought I ought to go to keep ’Melie company, and I ought to be forgiving, too. Besides that she can never tell half what a body has on.”

“The tea’s steeped now,” interposed Miss Amelia, placing it on the table as she spoke. “Please set to. Mary will you take a cup?”

“No; thank you, it ain’t long before supper time,” replied Mrs. Barker.

“Eat as hearty as you can,” said Miss Amelia, as the gentlemen seated themselves at the well-filled table. “I knew you must be well-nigh starved so I just hurried together the best I could get.”

“No apologies, I beg,” said Mr. Van Pike, placing

an enormous slice of meat on the doctor's plate. "Take some tongue, too, Dr. St. James. It's a special dish with me."

"I am glad I had it in the house," said Miss Barker; her real joy showing itself in the smiles that lighted up her kind face.

"That tongue reminds me of the supper we had at Deacon Lawson's that night I was telling of," said Mrs. Barker. "They didn't have supper until nigh about nine o'clock, and that was long enough after they were married. Old Dr. Doreann, poor man" (with a sigh), "took 'Melie out, and old John Hawks took me. I made up my mind then and there that he'd never beau me again anywhere; I almost cried at his impoliteness; for I do know something if I haven't ever been to York. Well, John he came up to me, with his trousers tucked in his boots, and his best coat on, and his hair smelling so strong of goose grease and his hands of brown soap, they scented the whole room. 'Well, indeed,' says he, 'who's beaung you to-night?' 'Most all of them,' I says; for I wasn't going to let him know that they weren't. 'I saw you weren't talking!' says he, 'and I wondered what was the matter.'

"'I was taking inward notes,' says I. 'I'd rather take something else inward,' says he. 'They're all going out to provender; let's you and I hook arms' (his very words), 'and follow;' with that he poked his arm out a-kimbo, and I took hold somewhere about the elbow, and we jostled out, he taking great strides and I half-

running to keep up with him. There was a big crowd hurrying into the sitting-room where the table was laid, and John elbowed his way through dragging me after him. We got to the table about the first, and got a good place right by the big pound cake ; and John, without waiting for manners, or anything, took a big piece of the cake before anybody else was helped. ‘Pitch in, widow,’ says he, with his mouth full ; ‘it’s all fired good.’ So I took a slice too, though I knew it wasn’t exactly polite ; but then it wouldn’t have been manners to refuse, seeing he beaved me out, and there was Crissy Wells and half a dozen others without any beaux at all.”

“But what about the tongue ?” asked Mr. Van Pike.

“I always was very fond o’ tongue, and that night at Deacon Lawson’s I didn’t see right away that they had any ; I was so busy talking to John ; and when I saw it, I says to him, ‘There’s some tongue, I’d thank you to pass it.’ ‘What did you say?’ says he. ‘I’d thank you for some o’ that tongue,’ says I again, thinking he didn’t hear me. ‘Do you hear that?’ he cried, raising his voice, ‘Widow Barker wants some tongue. Ha ! ha ! did you ever hear the like ?’ And everybody but the parson and Mrs. Lawson laughed ; and the deacon laughed the loudest of them all. Mrs. Lawson didn’t see the joke any more than I did, and brought the plate of it up to me.”

The gentlemen had by this time finished their re-

past, and Mr. Van Pike, being well warmed, felt equal to the task of ascending the hill which led to his own home. Wishing them a "good evening," he took his departure; and Mrs. Barker wisely suggested that the doctor might wish to be shown to his room.

CHAPTER VIII.

MISS BARKER'S house contained but six rooms. A very small place, it may be thought, for a boarding house ; and so it was. But there were never more than two boarders there at a time. At present one was a youth from the country. His father, a well-to-do farmer, desiring that the youngest son should be educated, had sent him to Newfield to attend the village academy—the only one for twenty miles around.

Silas Thorpe—for that was the youth's name—was not remarkably handsome (every one is not), but he had a good figure, and being of a fine appearance and possessing ample means he dressed in the height of Newfield fashion, which the lasses of the village took note of, and smiled on him accordingly, but to no avail ; he never sought their society. There was one great drawback to his doing so though he greatly desired to ; he was extremely bashful. So he always spent his evenings with the Barkers ; for having lived with them for over eighteen months, he at length became well acquainted with them, and a great friendship had sprung up between Miss Amelia and himself.

Miss Barker's cottage contained but six rooms ; four on the first floor and two above. It was built with a two-story main building and a one-story wing on

either side. The front door opened into the general family room. Back of this room was the wide, pleasant kitchen.

There was a door leading into the street—or rather, into the yard—from the north wing. So that was to be the doctor's office. The south wing was his bed-room, and as they both opened off of the sitting-room it was considered a fine arrangement.

“We thought,” Miss Barker said, as she showed him his sleeping room, “that you would like being down stairs, where you can hear any one who may knock in the night.”

“You are very thoughtful,” said St. James, as he entered the room.

It was a pleasant little apartment. A bright home-made carpet covered the floor, and white muslin curtains were looped back from the windows.

Miss Barker's best patch-work quilt adorned the high bed. It was the only quilt of that pattern in Newfield, which was a very fortunate state of affairs; for it was enough to keep any one who lay under it awake half the night. The doctor smiled as he surveyed it. There was a glaring red sun in the centre, with most impossible rays, which extended to the edge of the quilt; between each of these rays were little blue stars, and four pink moons were just disappearing in the four corners; the whole was upon white groundwork. This was the crowning glory of Mrs. Barker's life. She had invented the pattern herself, and had refused on all

occasions to lend it to her neighbors—the only instance on record when the widow was known to be obliging.

Thurston St. James was the third son of a wealthy Philadelphian. He was born and educated in that city, and lived there until this time. And now at the age of twenty-five he for the first time, left his father's roof. He had started out with great ideas of independence, and refused any money they offered him. He was tall, with broad shoulders, and fine looking. His mouth was firm and resolute, but half its beauty was hidden by a dark moustache—the only hair that he permitted to grow on his face. His large eyes were dark blue, and there was something so mournful in their gaze that it amounted even to sadness. He was devoted to his profession, and had made the study of it the one great object of his life ; but he also had some taste for theological pursuits. He was a strong Presbyterian, and was well informed in the particular tenets of that religion ; having read as many of their popular theological works as his close application to his profession would allow ; he had, however, read only on that one side.

He sat down before his trunk and opened it. The first thing that met his eyes was a letter directed to himself in his mother's handwriting. He picked it up eagerly, and as he opened it a number of bank bills fell from it. He gathered them up, and counted them : three hundred dollars ! There was an affectionate note from his mother, saying that she had regretted his un-

willingness to accept a large amount when he left his home, and knew that he would need much. Thurston tried to persuade himself that he was displeased, but he failed utterly, and even smiled as he placed it in his purse by the remains of the twenty-five which he had accepted when he came away. And he wrote immediately to his mother, thanking her for the gift, and giving her a description of his journey to Newfield and his reception there.

Two hours later, when he left his room he found the family assembled in the kitchen, which was also used as a dining-room. Silas Thorpe sat by the fire ; he had been talking to the ladies, but stopped the moment the doctor entered.

“Did you have a good sleep?” asked Miss Amelia, who was setting the table for supper.

“I have not been lying down ; I found my time fully occupied in unpacking.”

“Well, there now, I’d have helped you if you’d just said the word,” said Mrs. Barker regretfully. Such a treat as had been lost ! unpacking the doctor’s trunk, and knowing to the figure how many shirts he owned ; and if there were any old love-letters to read over when new ones did not come ; to have seen the picture of his lady-love—besides everything else it must have contained, for it was the largest trunk she had ever seen. “You must be tired.”

“Oh no, I am not,” returned Dr. St. James ; “it was not a very great task.”

“Dr. St. James, let me make you acquainted with Mr. Silas Thorpe,” said Miss Amelia.

Thurston took the youth's hand in a hearty grasp. “I am glad to meet you, sir,” the doctor said, really pleased with his appearance.

Silas made some response, which his bashfulness rendered unintelligible; but he determined secretly that he would like this elegant gentleman.

“Silas is dreadful bashful,” observed Mrs. Barker, by the way of embarrassing him.

The doctor making no reply, she continued: “Now if you have another trunk coming I'll help you unpack it.”

“Thank you,” returned Dr. St. James; “I have no more trunks, but my books will be here to-morrow; they however will be too heavy for you to assist me in unpacking.”

“Well, they might,” returned the widow doubtfully. She determined, however, to be present.

“Tea is ready,” announced Miss Amelia at that moment. “Silas, please put up your chair to the table, and bring the doctor one.”

Silas withdrew his eyes one instant from Thurston's face, where they had rested since that gentleman entered the room, and complied with the request. The doctor was standing with his back to the stove enjoying the warmth.

“I really feel unable to eat anything, Miss Barker,” he said.

“Well, just take a cup o’ tea ; it will warm you up,” said the spinster, entreatingly.

“Why, it won’t seem like tea at all if you don’t sit down too,” said Mrs. Barker.

The doctor had just seated himself in the chair placed for him, when a loud, startling knock sounded at the outer door of the sitting-room.

“Who can that be ?” said Miss Amelia, earnestly looking from one face to another.

“They made noise enough,” said Mrs. Barker.

“I wonder what they want,” said Miss Amelia, still in great astonishment.

“They *may* want to get in,” said Dr. St. James. Miss Amelia acting upon this suggestion hastened to open the door.

“My sakes !” exclaimed Mrs. Barker ; “it always frightens me so to hear a loud knock ; it reminds me of the time they brought my Josiah home on a shutter. The men that brought him gave the awfulest knock you ever heard. It frightened me so that it was five minutes before I knew enough to open the door, and the men were terribly angry because I kept them there holding that heavy shutter. There my Josiah lay : I thought he was dead, and I gave one scream, ‘Josiah,’ I says, ‘has it come to this, that I see you lying there dead, and your wife a widow. Oh, has it come to this ?’ ‘No,’ he called out ; ‘it ain’t come to nothing.’ And I thought he was speaking to me from Heaven. But those men hadn’t a spark of sympathy

for a woman's tender heart; they only hurried me to get a bed ready to lay him in. You can't tell how relieved I felt when I found that he had only sprained his ankle. But to this day I hate to hear a loud knock at the door.

In the meantime a vigorous whispered conversation was being carried on at the outer door between Miss Barker and a neighbor's daughter, who had run to the house, with a shawl thrown over her head, to deliver to the inmates of the cottage invitations to a quilting party which her mother intended giving on the following Tuesday afternoon and evening.

Miss Amelia had accepted the invitations for her sister-in-law and herself, and told the young girl of the new physician's arrival.

"Bring him along: do. Ma'll be dreadful glad. Is he married?"

"No. You'd better come in and ask him yourself; maybe he won't take an invitation second-hand."

"*Me* go in? Oh my stars! I don't look fit," giggled the young lady.

"Fit! of course you do. Just walk right in," said Miss Amelia, drawing her into the house and closing the door after her.

The doctor sat with his back to the sitting-room door as she entered the kitchen smoothing her hair.

"Good evening, Mis' Barker. Good evening, Mr. Thorpe. Miss Amelia told me to walk right in, and not to mind if I don't look fit to be seen. I hope you'll

excuse my appearance. I don't know what ma'll say to my coming in."

She was clad in a bright-hued calico dress, with a snowy collar and red bow, and a neat white apron; altogether, with her shining hair, she could not have looked neater. And, as she took a seat by the stove, the doctor thought he saw in her the personification of a village belle; for having heard so much of that rustic beauty he was now on the look-out for her.

"Miss Morris, allow me to make you acquainted with Dr. St. James of Philadelphia," spoke Miss Amelia. The doctor arose and made a low bow. Miss Morris, seeing that was city manners followed his example.

"Our new doctor," added Mrs. Barker.

"The new doctor! My stars!" returned Miss Morris. "You must have had a cold ride," she said to him.

"It was very cold indeed," said Thurston.

"My stars! I'm glad that I hadn't to go riding in that old stage to-day."

"I would have chosen another day if it had been possible," said the physician.

"You were 'most frozen when you got here," said Mrs. Barker.

"He was! My stars!" Miss Morris remarked quietly.

"Miss Barker's kind cup of tea soon revived me."

"And Mr. Van Pike, too," added Mrs. Barker, that their neighbor might know of the distinguished visitor.

“Was Mr. Van Pike here?” she cried. “The very idea! I wonder how Laury is. I’m going up there to-morrow to invite her to our quilting party. I ’most forgot what I came in for. We’re going to have a quilting party at our house next Tuesday. I asked Miss ’Melie, and she says she’ll come; and I s’pose you will too, Mis’ Barker.”

“Me? Oh, yes, I’ll come; and I’ll do a power o’ sewing. What pattern is your mother going to quilt them?”

“My stars, as if I knew,” giggled Miss Morris.

“Are they Maria’s quilts?” asked Miss Amelia, meaningly.

“Yes, but you musn’t let on I told you: she’d be awful mad. I just called in,” continued Miss Morris, smiling her politest smile, “to ask if the doctor and Mr. Thorpe would give us the pleasure of their amiable society in the evening, to come at seven.”

The doctor instantly resolved to accept the invitation, for the double purpose of the pleasure it would give him, and the opportunity it would afford of making the acquaintance of the towns-people.

Silas said a few almost unintelligible words about not being able to do so, to which Miss Morris replied that he must. “You’re always refusing everybody,” she went on; “but I won’t let you off so easy,” with a coquettish glance which was entirely lost upon him. “But the doctor will come,” she continued.

“It will give me great pleasure to do so, and I cer-

tainly shall accept your kind invitation if Mr. Thorpe will accompany me."

"I!" said Silas, surprised out of his bashfulness, "You certainly cannot want me to accompany you."

"I certainly do," said Dr. St. James; "for being entirely unacquainted with the people of Newfield I shall need you to introduce me." Perceiving at once the unfortunate bashfulness under which Silas labored, the kind-hearted doctor determined to assist him to overcome it.

"I am not much acquainted either," returned Silas, the matter looking more favorable in the light of the doctor's protection.

"Now, Mr. Thorpe, *do* come," smiled Miss Morris.

"Yes now, Silas, when Marthy asks you so pretty," said Mrs. Barker. "It's a great shame to think how you stay at home. You've no idea of it, doctor."

"My stars, no!" ejaculated Miss Morris. "And when the doctor wants to come so bad too," she added.

"Yes," said Thurston, repressing a smile at this description of his feelings.

"Silas will go, I know," said Miss Amelia.

"Well, perhaps I may," he answered desperately.

"I must go," said Miss Morris, at length rising. "My stars! but it's got dark quick," looking out of the window, and thinking how nice it would be to have the handsome stranger escort her home on the night of his arrival.

Nothing, however, was farther from Thurston's

thoughts. But Mrs. Barker understood the remark and hastened to prevent such a thing. "Silas will go home with you if you are afraid," said she obligingly.

"Oh, no!" cried Miss Martha, "I'm not afraid." Silas arose and was getting his hat. "Indeed, I'm not afraid, Mr. Thorpe; it ain't two steps. Good night, folks. Be sure and come early on Tuesday afternoon;" and Miss Morris was gone.

"I guess you forgot your manners, 'Melie, when you didn't ask her to have a cup of tea," said Mrs. Barker as the door closed after her.

"She said at the door that she'd been to tea."

"I'd have asked her myself if I'd had a chance to get a word in."

"I believe the tea is cold," observed Miss Barker, placing it on the stove.

"So those quilts are for Maria's outfit," said the widow. "That wedding's a job for Mr. Brentwell; for these Morrisises are stiff-backed Episcopalians, and so are the Van Pikes. Will you ask a blessing, doctor?"

Thurston readily complied with the request. Mrs. Barker was well pleased by the five minutes' prayer which he made. And Silas, although by no means careless of religion, thought that it would have been as well if Dr. St. James had restricted himself to asking a blessing on the food, instead of praying at that time for everything and everybody.

"That is the best prayer I have heard in a long time," said Mrs. Barker with a long-drawn sigh when he

had concluded. "I suppose that you are a professor."

"I am ; and I endeavor to live up to my profession."

"That relieves my mind. Mary and I have belonged to Baptist meeting these twenty-five years or more."

"Indeed ! I am a Presbyterian. I was born and bred in that faith. Are you too a Baptist, Mr. Thorpe ?"

"I am an Episcopalian," he answered.

"As I was saying," said Mrs. Barker, "the Van Pikes are Episcopalians. Laury is stuck up as you please. Daisy Brentwell now she likes, but Daisy don't care for her. Laury don't care for the other girls. The Brentwells are all nice folks, but they have their troubles : that Paul of theirs is the worst boy in town, and he's going right on from worse to worse ; and Daisy is going to die, that's sure. She's bleeding at the lungs again ; what do you suppose made her ?"

"A sudden cold, perhaps," said the doctor, thinking she had asked him professionally.

"Well, it was her awful temper."

"Now, Mary, you never saw her angry," said Miss Amelia.

"No, but Crissy Wells was telling me the other day that Mrs. March told her the night before—and she had it from Mother Wade, that Tim saw her so awfully mad that she stamped and danced on the floor."

"And what made her ?" Silas asked, as if he knew all of the matter.

“Tim tortured her little kitten.”

“Indeed I don’t wonder that she was angry,” said the doctor ; “I should have been inclined to apply the same treatment to him.”

“Paul and Herbert gave it to him,” said Silas, forgetting himself in the excitement of the moment.

“Well,” said Mrs. Barker, jerking her chair closer to the table, “there’s nothing that will reconcile my mind to a minister’s daughter letting her angry passions rise.”

5*

CHAPTER IX.

“He appeared as tall as an ordinary spire-steeple, and took about ten yards at every stride, as near as I could guess. I was struck with the utmost fear and astonishment.”—DEAN SWIFT.

MISS MARTHA MORRIS left her home the next morning as soon as the work was “done up,” and spent the day calling upon the village people, inviting them one and all to the quilting party. At the same time she gave an account of her call at Miss Amelia’s, and a highly colored description of Dr. St. James.

She arrived at the rectory quite late in the afternoon. The male portion of the family were out—of course Miss Morris was relieved when she saw that. Mrs. Brentwell was at her usual Saturday’s baking, and her three daughters were sewing in the sitting-room.

“Good afternoon, girls. How are you all? I’ve been trying to get around here all the week; for I heard Daisy was sick again. My stars! how sick you do look! You’re as yellow as saffron.”

“I am better than I was, thank you,” replied Daisy, “I think I am well now.”

“I’m glad to hear that. I’ve had the awfulest tooth-ache all this week. Oh, there’s Mis’ Brentwell! Busy as ever I see,” going out into the kitchen. “My

stars, what nice bread ! I've heard ma tell time and again that it took Mis' Brentwell to make good bread."

"Take a chair by the fire," said Daisy, as they returned to the sitting-room.

"I haven't a minute to stay. I just ran in to invite you all 'round to our house next Tuesday afternoon to a quilting party. Your mother and you three girls are to come in the afternoon—early, mind ; and your pa and the boys, and Mr. Horatio are to come to tea. And in the evening we are going to have the biggest kind of a party."

"Oh, that will be elegant," cried Lestie. "We'll all come."

"Thank you," said Daisy, "I am certain we will be happy to come."

"I'm just worn out," sighed Martha, rockingslowly ; "I've been delivering invitations all day ; and I do believe the whole village will be there—even the *new doctor*."

"The new doctor !" cried the sisters.

"When did he come ?" asked Lestie.

"Oh, my stars ! You don't mean to say that you don't know. Why, you *are* behind the times."

"We've seen no one," Lestie said by way of apology. "Do tell us ; who is he ? and what is he like ? and when did he come ?"

"I can't answer all those questions at once," returned Miss Morris giggling. "I'll begin at the beginning and tell you all I know. First, his name is St. James."

“That is a pretty name,” said Christie. “What is his Christian name?”

“Oh my stars, I didn’t ask him! He boards at Widow Barker’s.”

“Widow Barker’s!” repeated Lestie and Daisy: Christie for some cause kept silent.

“Yes, at Widow Barker’s, and he came yesterday; Mr. Van Pike brought him, and he’s from Philadelphia. Miss ’Melie said so when she introduced him to me.”

“Why! did you get acquainted with him?” asked Lestie.

“Oh my stars, yes! spent an evening with him already.”

“How did that happen?” asked Christie.

“I’m going to tell you.”

“Well, do so as quick as you can,” laughed Daisy; “for we are really dying with curiosity.”

“Ma says to me yesterday, right after tea, ‘Marthy, I’m worried about those invitations; there hasn’t one been given out yet, so just take your shawl and run over to Miss Amelia’s, and invite her and the widow to our quilting, and Silas Thorpe, too, if he’ll come.’ ‘Oh, my stars!’ says I, ‘there ain’t any use in inviting Silas Thorpe; he’ll never come, I know.’ ‘Well, you might be polite, and ask him,’ says she. And so I just run over with my shawl on my head. I gave an awful knock, for I was in a hurry; it was so cold standing there. Miss ’Melie she came to the door half frightened to death. I gave her the invitations, and she told me

about the new doctor's coming from Philadelphia that day. I didn't think much about him so I just said, 'Fetch him along.' But she wasn't going to take him any invitations second-hand, she said ; and she dragged me right into the kitchen where they were just sitting down to tea ; and oh my stars, girls, I looked awful ! I never was so ashamed ! but Miss 'Melie made me go right in. There was Silas Thorpe looking as spruce as ever, but the doctor took the shine all off of him. Oh, girls, he's elegant !"

"Is he young ?" asked Lestie.

"Oh, awful young ! When Miss 'Melie introduced me," she went on, "he rose right up, and made the most elegant bow you ever saw ; it beats Silas Thorpe's all hollow ; and the girls used to think no one could bow like him. Well, the doctor he was dressed to kill : elegant broadcloth clothes, and the most beautiful black neck-tie I ever saw ; I thought I'd go off, but I never said a word ;" (Daisy thought not) "and he had two rings."

"What kind ?" questioned Lestie.

"Oh my stars, I didn't ask him ! but I guess one was a di'mond, it shone like Laury Van Pike's. And he's got an elegant gold watch and chain, and a di'mond pin on his shirt front."

"My !" said the astonished Lestie.

"Yes," continued Miss Morris, much gratified by the impression she was making—"yes, and he's got the smallest, *teeniest* little boots I ever saw ; and oh my

stars, girls, what hands ! they ain't as big as mine ; as true as I'm sitting here, girls ! ”

“ But what does he look like ? ” asked Christie.

“ He's the handsomest man I ever laid my eyes on ; it 'most took me off my feet to look at him. He's got the loveliest hair ; it's wavy and curly and glistens in the light, and it's kind o' reddish. No, I don't mean that—it ain't real red, one minute it's real black.”

“ Why did he come to Newfield ? ”

“ I don't know : Miss 'Melie didn't know.”

“ I wonder if he belongs to our church,” said Christie.

“ I don't know that either,” regretfully acknowledged Miss Morris.

“ Will he be at the quilting ? ” asked Lestie.

“ Oh, I must tell you,” brightening up again. “ I asked him and Silas both together, and Silas said ‘ No,’ just as I expected he would ; and what do you think Dr. St. James said ? ”

“ I hope he didn't refuse, too,” said Lestie.

“ He said,” leaning forward and lowering her voice impressively, “ that he would, if Silas would. ‘ Oh, my stars ! ’ says Silas, ‘ you don't want me.’ ‘ Yes, I do,’ says the doctor. ‘ I don't know any one and can't go,’ says Silas. Then the doctor says to me as pretty, ‘ You may expect me, Marthy, if you can make Silas go.’ You see, the doctor's awful bashful, and he wants some company to go with. ‘ Oh my stars ! ’ says he, ‘ to think of my going alone—I'd rather die.’ ”

“The new doctor said that?” cried Daisy, in great surprise, while he sank somewhat in her opinion.

Martha said “Yes,” at all hazards, though she was a little doubtful in her own mind—“yes; for he’s bashful.”

“Will Silas come?” asked Lestie.

“Well, Miss ‘Melie and Mis’ Barker began coaxing him too, and I think he will. At any rate, Dr. St. James won’t come without him, so maybe he’ll come for his sake. I must be going now,” she added, rising.

“Don’t hurry,” said Daisy.

“Oh, I must; I’ve been away all day. I ‘most forgot, Lestie; I’ve been to Will Lendrem’s, and he wouldn’t promise one mite to come unless I’d tell him that you’d be there.”

“I’m tired of him,” returned Lestie.

“Well, Jim Van Pike was quite as anxious,” said Martha laughing. “He said he’d cut Will Lendrem out, and Laury wanted to know who was to go home with her if he did. But don’t you be afraid, Lestie, her pa’s coming too, to take her home. And I’m to introduce her to the doctor the first thing. My stars, how late it is! good-by, girls. Come early.” And the house door closed after Miss Morris and her stars.

In a little while after there was loud knocking, stamping, talking, hallooing heard outside, something like a small army would have made; and Herbert and Paul rushed in like a whirlwind.

“Supper ‘most ready?” called Herbert.

"I'm 'most starved," cried Paul.

"Remember where your hats belong, my sons, and that there are ladies in the room," said Mrs. Brentwell, in her gentle way. And the hats were hung on the proper nails behind the kitchen door. "Supper will not be ready for an hour," she said, "but there are apples and gingerbread in the cupboard." Apples and gingerbread were a daily programme, and the boys had not waited to be reminded of them before they made their way to the cupboard. Seating themselves by the fire they began a hurried recital of their afternoon adventures, including a description of Thurston whom they had seen.

"Does he look bashful?" asked Lestie, who was greatly troubled on that point.

"You bet he don't," returned Paul, with his mouth full. "I can tell you, he's style."

"Everybody stared at him," said Herbert.

"I didn't," returned Paul, threateningly.

"Well, I did."

"You were green to do it. I guess he took you for a greenhorn, anyhow."

"Where did you hear about him, Lestie?" Herbert asked suddenly. She told him of Martha's visit, the invitation to the quilting party, and the description of the new comer.

The boys were delighted with the quilting party, especially the supper part: Paul declared that it would be a "buster," while Herbert mildly described it as

“bully,” but they ridiculed Miss Morris’ description of St. James. “He’s got his sign up already,” announced Herbert, “and his first name is Thurston.”

“And he’s been out visiting patients,” added Paul.

As Newfield had no alternative but to employ Dr. St. James he entered immediately into Dr. Doreann’s practice. And though it was not without some fear of risk that many employed him, they soon found that he equalled if not excelled the old physician in medical knowledge, and that practice was all that he required to be a physician of the first rank.

The following day being Sunday Thurston went to Presbyterian service, which act the village was well aware of two minutes after the service was over.

There had been a great deal of conjecture on the subject of his religious views, and most persons thought that he would attend St. Paul’s, as that had been Dr. Doreann’s church. So it was not without a slight feeling of triumph that the Presbyterians of Newfield saw the elegant stranger take his seat among them on the first Sunday after his arrival, thereby showing that it was his intention to attend their service.

Mr. Brentwell was disappointed ; he had hoped that Dr. Doreann’s successor in practice would be his successor in the church.

CHAPTER X.

“Alas ! for the rarity
Of Christian charity
Under the sun ! ”

—THOMAS HOOD.

MRS. BARKER and Miss Amelia were washing the dinner dishes on the day of Mrs. Morris' quilting party. It was growing late, and Newfield etiquette required them to be there at two o'clock ; some went earlier.

The table was laid for supper ; for Silas Thorpe and Dr. St. James were to take their tea at home. A few moments before two Mrs. Barker knocked at the office door.

Thurston opened it.

“ If you'll step into the kitchen,” she said, leading the way, “ I'll just show you.”

She was dressed in a stiff alpaca with a broad linen collar fastened by a ponderous brooch made of her husband's red hair, her sole ornament.

She stood by the stove, with the tea-pot in one hand, and the lid in the other. The doctor leaned against the mantel, half annoyed and half amused.

“ I showed Silas,” said the widow, “ but I don't suppose he'll remember. See ! I've put the tea in.

Now, when it gets to be about five o'clock—or a little later, according to the time you get hungry—just tell Silas to put the kettle on. I've put the water in ; I was afraid he'd get in too much ; and if there *is* too much in it won't boil under an hour. My Josiah, when he'd fill the kettle for me—and there wa'n't a better man to help a woman round the house than he was—he'd get up of a morning, and have the fire made and the kettle on by the time I'd come down ; and there's Mis' Pepper's man, he'd no more do it than he'd fly—and my Josiah was a master hand at making a fire. They do say—but I make a point of not believing these sayings that go round—but they *do* say that those that make a smart fire have a smart partner, but there's nothing in it—but my Josiah always got the tea-kettle too full ; there has got to be just so much in it, and no more. Well, when the kettle is boiled just set it on—there. Do you know when a kettle is boiled ?”

“I do,” returned Thurston, three-quarters annoyed, and one-quarter amused.

“That's more than my Josiah knew. When it's boiled, take this holder bound with red—not that one—in one hand—or tell Silas to—and pour the water into the tea-pot up to that mark—there. Then you set it on this place—here, and stand by until it comes just to a boil. *Just to a boil* ; remember, *just to a boil*. Then you take it off quick. Now there's 'Melie—I wouldn't say a word against her for the world ; we've lived together as peaceably as two lambs these many years—but

'Melie *can't make a cup of tea*, not what *I* call a cup of tea ; she always lets hers boil, and ruins it."

"I'll be careful."

"It ain't just the thing, I know," she went on, "for us to be going off and leaving Silas and you to get your own tea."

"I shall make good use of your absence," returned Thurston, "and endeavor to get better acquainted with him."

"It seems most like a miracle that you persuaded him to go with you. I don't know what Mis' Morris and Marthy will say—"

"Mary Barker," cried Miss Amelia, coming into the room ready to go, "do you know that it is after two o'clock ? Mis' Morris'll think we haven't any manners to go so late ; everybody'll be there."

"Yes," cried Mrs. Barker suddenly greatly distressed, "and I wanted to see Mis' Wylie's new hood ; I've been telling the Doctor about tea. Just fix my shawl a little, 'Melie : I don't want to put on airs, but if Laury Van Pike is there, I don't want to be all in the shade. There—that's it—thank you. Don't forget to tell Silas to lock the shed door, doctor, nor to put the sticks over the sitting-room windows. And be careful about the fire. When you put out the light, just send Silas back to see if there are any sparks left to set the house on fire. I don't mean to order you, doctor."

"I understand."

"—But—Oh, there's 'Melie going without me," and

Mrs. Barker hastened off with her mouth wide open prepared for the next remark.

Thurston watched them from his office window as they walked up the street.

“I wonder what Mrs. Wolcot St. James would say to this establishment,” he mused ; “Miss Abby might be a little less enthusiastic over a country physician’s life. Well, Miss Abby, I would even like to see your face at this moment ; father did know more than I did when he said I would be home-sick. And I believe, upon my honor, that I would go back to-morrow if it were not for that honor, and a *few* remarks Wolcot and Mayne would make. And mother—bless her—how glad she would be to see me. To-night I shall see Newfield together and get acquainted generally. I shall write about it to Abby to-morrow ; for I *must* write to her—thanks to Wolcot’s wife.” He put his hands in his pocket and whistled an air softly—an air that Miss Abby Emerson had sung for him the night before he came away.

Miss Amelia and her sister-in-law had not committed such an unpardonable breach of etiquette as they had feared ; only three ladies had arrived before them ; Mrs. Grahame, one of the true ladies of Newfield ; Mrs. Pepper, a firm friend of Mrs. Barker’s, and Mrs. March whom we have already mentioned.

These were seated in the large sitting-room, where two quilts were stretched upon frames.

Martha hastened to take their things, and laid them upon the bed in the little room adjoining.

“We thought we’d be late,” spoke Mrs. Barker, seating herself.

“You air,” returned Mrs. Morris.

“We got the doctor and Silas their tea before we came,” explained Miss Amelia.

“Are they coming?” inquired Martha, carefully closing the bed-room door as she came out.

“Oh, yes,” said Miss Amelia.

“Silas, too?” cried Martha; “well, I never.”

“It took the doctor to bring him,” said Mrs. Barker. Then followed a long account, not only of the doctor’s manner of bringing Silas, but a complete description of Thurston St. James for the benefit of those ladies who had not yet seen him. Before it was finished the room was filled, and they had taken their seats around the quilting-frame where Mrs. Barker found herself seated by Mrs. Pepper.

“You weren’t around to Deacon Calfort’s last night,” spoke the latter in a low tone.

“No; I didn’t hear of a meeting there.”

“There wasn’t a meeting. A few neighbors dropped in and we had it all out.”

“What out?”

“We got to talking about things in general,” said Mrs. Pepper mysteriously. “The Deacon he’s not going to stand things any more as he has lately. You see Mis’ Calfort went up to Mis’ Borne’s yesterday, and was insulted.”

“You don’t say! How?”

“I’m telling you. She knocked at the front door, and one of the young ones opened it. ‘Is your ’ma in?’ says Mis’ Calfort. ‘Yes, ma’am,’ says the child, holding the door half shut. ‘What’s she doing?’ asks Mis’ Calfort. ‘She’s washing,’ says the child. ‘Then, I’ll go right in where she is,’ says Mis’ Calfort; for you know she is alwa’s as polite and obliging as any lady can be. ‘She needn’t dress to see me,’ says she. And at that the girl,—it was Lucy—opened the door and let her in; but she says as impudent as you please, ‘’Ma said that if it was anybody to see her I was to take ’em in the parlor; she don’t want anybody to come out where she’s washing.’ ‘Well, I ain’t anybody,’ says Mis’ Calfort; ‘she needn’t mind me.’ ‘Yes, she will,’ says Lucy; ‘walk into the parlor.’ So Mis’ Calfort couldn’t do less than go into the parlor and swallow the insult. If you haven’t got a right to go into your minister’s kitchen I’d like to know whose kitchen you can go in—that’s what I want to know. And—what do you think?” Mrs. Pepper’s voice sank lower and grew more mysterious.

“Do tell,” cried the widow, eagerly.

“Mis’ Calfort looked at the clock when she went in; and Mis’ Borne *didn’t come into that parlor for five whole minutes.*”

“I want to know!” cried Mrs. Barker.

“No,” continued Mrs. Pepper, “not for five whole minutes. Now, is it manners to leave company to entertain themselves for five minutes? If things are

coming to such a pass it's time something was done." Mrs. Pepper nodded significantly. "When it comes to having the wife of one of our deacons insulted when she calls on the minister's folks it has got to be stopped. Deacon Lawson had dropped in; Mis' Grimes and Lavinia were there, and Mr. Church, so we had quite a meeting. And the hash is all to be settled next Monday night at the church-meeting. There's some folks, who have just moved from Fairhope to be taken in then, and Saray Luce is to give in her experience. You and 'Melie must be sure to come; and you're to vote against having the deacon's wife insulted."

"Are they going to have that up?" asked Mrs. Barker, in great astonishment.

"Something pretty near like it. But that ain't all," she went on. "When Mis' Calfort was there she smelt the clothes burning on the stove. Did you ever hear of such shiftlessness?"

"I never did; still I always knew that Mis' Borne was shiftless. I was there not long ago, and I went right into the kitchen, whether or no. I went round to the back door and knocked, and there wasn't any use in trying to keep me out. Little Willie opened the door, and in I walked. Mis' Borne she sat by the fire holding the baby and giving it milk to drink. And in the corner sat Edgerton—who ever heard of a christian child having such a name?—and litter enough he was making, cutting and slashing with a pair o' shears that he might have run into his eyes at any time. And such

a looking room I never did see before. ‘Oh, Mis’ Barker,’ says Mis’ Borne, rising up, ‘I’m glad to see you. Will you walk into the parlor?’ And never one word did she say about the room or her dress or the way the children looked. She never made any excuse for anything. You needn’t tell me that she’s shiftless; haven’t I known it this long time and never said a word about it? I ain’t the one to make mischief. Now, there’s ‘Melie, she’s awful tender-hearted, and she’s alwa’s saying, ‘Poor creature, she has so much to do with those nine little children,’ and she’ll wonder that she gets through with it all. My mother raised ten, and she wasn’t shiftless and untidy I can tell you.”

“My mother had twelve,” rejoined Mrs. Pepper; “and we were made to work, too; she didn’t believe in fooling. The fact is—in plain words, Mis’ Barker—Mis’ Borne ain’t over fond of work of any kind. Did you see Mr. Borne’s vest, on Sunday?”

“No.”

“He kept his coat buttoned up pretty tight over it; but when we were standing down by the stove he wanted a paper or something out of his breast pocket and he opened his coat, and then I see that his vest was all torn. It wasn’t fit to wear. Don’t tell me,” (shaking her head grimly) “his wife could have mended it if she had wanted to do so, but she didn’t. She wasn’t even at meeting Sunday night; and that is three Sunday nights running that she has stayed away. What kind of an example is that for a pastor’s wife to set to a flock?”

coming to such a pass it's time something was done." Mrs. Pepper nodded significantly. "When it comes to having the wife of one of our deacons insulted when she calls on the minister's folks it has got to be stopped. Deacon Lawson had dropped in; Mis' Grimes and Laviny were there, and Mr. Church, so we had quite a meeting. And the hash is all to be settled next Monday night at the church-meeting. There's some folks, who have just moved from Fairhope to be taken in then, and Saray Luce is to give in her experience. You and 'Melie must be sure to come; and you're to vote against having the deacon's wife insulted."

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The truth is, Mis' Barker, Mis' Borne ain't any too religious."

"That's so," returned the widow: "only Sunday before last I went around there to talk over the sermon with Mr. Borne; there were some things in it that I didn't just like, and I wanted to talk about 'em and have 'em settled. 'Melie she didn't want me to go: she'd swallow anything. Well, I'm one o' the most peaceful creatures you ever see, but when it comes to your parson preaching bad doctrines from the pulpit, I believe in having it out with him."

"That's so," responded Mrs. Pepper.

"So I put on my bonnet, and went over. They were all sitting round the study fire. Mr. Borne was reading the *Examiner*, and Mis' Borne was reading, and the children were looking at pictures—every one of them, from the baby up. *There wasn't one reading the Bible.*"

"I want to know," cried Mrs. Pepper, holding up both hands, scissors, thimble, needle and thread included. "Not one reading the Bible, and on Sunday afternoon! Every one of *my* children read it all day long on Sunday; they know they've got to, and they do it. I tell you, Mis' Barker, bring up a child in the way he should go, and when he's old he won't depart from it. Any one can see how Mis' Borne has been brought up."

"Oh, my stars!" cried Martha Morris, at the top of her voice, "if here ain't Mis' Brentwell at last," running to meet her. "Why where's Daisy and the girls?"

Oh, here are Lestie and Christie. Let me take your things."

Mrs. Morris hurried forward.

"Bring the big rocking-chair out for Mis' Brentwell, Marthy. How are Mr. Brentwell and the boys?"

"Where's Daisy?" again asked Martha, when Mrs. Brentwell's wrappings were removed, and she was seated in the best parlor chair by the fire.

"She will be here presently, with Horatio." A loud knock was heard at the door at that moment; Miss Martha hastened to answer it, and Miss Crissy Wells walked in.

Having so frequently heard this lady alluded to as the chief gossip of Newfield, the reader has doubtless imagined a tall, thin, angular lady, with weak grey eyes, and a few scanty hairs twisted in a knot at the back of her head; a long sharp nose that was forever prying into what did not concern it, glasses set upon this nose, and over and under which the weak, watery eyes peered with a searching gaze. It may also have been thought that she wore mitts to church, and that on such occasions she never bent her fingers, lest the aforesaid mitts should come to an untimely end by the process of wearing out. But this was not Miss Crissy's description. She was neither thin nor stout, neither tall nor short, angular nor buxom. Her eyes were not of any particular color, her nose was neither long nor short, nor did it appear to aid the tongue in its investigations after truth. She looked neither over nor under her glasses, but through them;

nor did she wear mitts ; in the winter her hands were encased in stout mittens knit by the sister with whom she lived, and in the summer she wore no gloves at all. In short she was one of those persons whom we sometimes see, who so closely resemble the majority of mankind that they seem to have no settled look of their own, and whose features we cannot learn until we have seen them at least a dozen times.

CHAPTER XI.

“That old miracle—love-at-first-sight—needs no explanations. The heart reads aright its destiny sometimes.” —OWEN MEREDITH.

THE doctor and Silas Thorpe grew quite confidential over their bachelor tea. Thurston talked of his friends and his old home, and Silas talked of his prospects in life and of his one draw-back to pleasure—his bashfulness.

“You cannot imagine how I suffer from it,” he said.

“I think I understand your feelings, though I never suffered from it. Allow me as your physician to prescribe for you. It may be a bitter dose, but you must take it.”

“What is it?”

“It is this : accept every invitation to go out, and make calls when you are invited to do so.”

“I never can do that.”

“Well think of it. You are going out to-night, and to-morrow I shall expect a note of thanks from you for being the means of your going.”

“If I don’t put an end to my life before we reach Mrs. Morris’ door. I am not at all conversant with the rules of etiquette,” he continued ; “and that is one reason why I shun society. A month or so ago I bought a

book on the subject ; and learned it almost by heart, but it does me no good ; I can't follow out the rules at all."

Dr. St. James requested to see the book, and when it was brought he took it for his text, delivering a lecture that lasted until they reached Mrs. Morris' house. Silas had profited by all his new friend had said to him, and felt equal to anything—until the door was opened, and Miss Morris stood smiling there.

She was dressed in a bright green alpaca, with immense hoops, and a number of large pink bows on her smooth hair and down the bosom of her dress.

"Oh my stars !" was her greeting, "how late you are ! Everybody is here."

"Mr. Thorpe and I became so interested in the subject we were discussing that the time went before we were aware of it," said the doctor.

Silas, meanwhile, had summoned courage to say that it was a pleasant evening, but was quite disconcerted by Martha bringing her stars to witness that every one who had thus far arrived had made the same remark ; she almost knew it by this time ! The doctor bit his lips with vexation, and felt that half of his evening's work was undone.

They were ushered into the sitting-room, from which all signs of the quilting had long been removed. Mrs. Morris met them at the door, shaking hands warmly with Silas, and greeting the doctor in a hearty manner when Silas introduced him.

Every eye in the room was turned upon the stranger,

when Mrs. Morris, in true country fashion, presented him to those assembled, by announcing,—“Dr. St. James, our new physician.” If Thurston could have known how handsome, how grand and manly he looked, as he bowed, a little conceit would have been pardonable. A number of the gentlemen came up to him, and introduced themselves.

In the meantime Horatio Brentwell had taken Silas to where his sisters sat and introduced him to them, giving him a chair near Christie and Daisy. Lestie was flirting with Will Lendrem and Jim Van Pike, two young gentlemen of twenty—or less.

Daisy began talking with Silas in her low, sweet tones, setting him in a few moments entirely at ease. It did not take any one a great length of time to become acquainted with her ; but he glanced from time to time toward Christie, who was silent, and wondered if he would ever have the courage to address a remark to her. By degrees, however, she was drawn into the circle, and the four were soon conversing together as though Silas had known them for years.

Miss Martha Morris considered it her duty to entertain the doctor as he was a stranger, and this duty she performed with a religious determination. She placed a chair for him in the middle of the room and seated herself beside him. But she was not long allowed the pleasure, or task, of doing so alone ; a bent-up old man approached.

“My name is Nichols,” he said, holding out a withered hand. “I hear that you are from Philadelphia.”

Thurston placed him a chair. "I am proud to say that I am from Philadelphia," he returned as he greeted him.

"Hey?" cried the old man holding his hand behind his ear, "you ain't proud! I didn't s'pose you was, or I wouldn't 'ave come to speak to you. You don't look like none o' them stuck up jack-a-napes what comes up from York sometimes."

"He's deaf as a post," explained Martha.

"I said," continued Thurston, speaking very loud, "that I was proud to say that Philadelphia is my home."

"Don't be proud, young man. Don't be proud o' nothin'," said Mr. Nichols, in the loud tone generally used by deaf persons, catching about half of the doctor's remark. "Don't be proud; for pride allus has a fall."

The persons in that immediate vicinity now became very much interested in this conversation, and their own was suspended in consequence to Thurston's great annoyance and Martha's amusement.

"Oh, my stars!" cried that young lady, "there's no use in your trying to talk to him; he can't hear half a word."

"What do you say, Marthy Morris?" bawled the old man. Martha pointed her forefinger toward Dr. St. James to indicate that she had addressed him alone.

Thurston ventured to remark, at this, that it was a pleasant gathering. Mr. Nichols looked at him for a moment and cried in a loud tone, "You've a mighty

weak voice for a young doctor. Do they train 'em so in the city now-a-days?"

Martha giggled, and cried, "Oh my stars!" which made Mr. Nichols eye her with suspicion. Thurston, in despair, was beginning to wonder if this were a second edition of the old man of the sea, when a tall, fine-looking gentleman came up to him.

"Dr. St. James, I believe," he said, "I am the Rev. Mr. Brentwell, of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in this village."

"Our minister," added Martha.

Thurston shook hands with our minister, expressing his pleasure at the meeting.

Mr. Brentwell seated himself beside him, and entered into an interesting conversation—so interesting indeed that a half an hour or more had elapsed before one thought of Silas entered Thurston's mind. He looked quickly around the room, half expecting to see him standing alone in some corner, perhaps with his thumbs in his mouth. Great was his surprise on beholding him seated near two young ladies, earnestly and apparently fearlessly conversing with them. A young man was seated by him evidently encouraging him at every opportunity.

Thurston's eyes lingered on Daisy's face. He thought he had never seen such a strangely fascinating face before—he could not call it beautiful. He had seen many handsome faces in his life, but none that ever attracted him as did hers. He had attained the age of

twenty-five without having ever loved any woman. His parents and brothers had determined long ago that he should some day marry Miss Abby Emerson, an orphan cousin of his eldest brother's wife; and the young lady herself stood ready to give her blushing consent. So he had regarded himself half bound to her, though *he* had given her no cause to think so from his conduct to her, or by his words. But to-night, far away from Miss Emerson, making use of the liberty he had craved for a little longer, he was looking on Daisy's face and blessing his good fortune that he was *not* bound to Miss Abby for life. Every one had decided that Daisy was looking unusually well that night. She wore a bright maroon colored merino, her hair hung in natural curls, which reached far below her slender waist and were looped back from her softly flushed face; and a little red geranium fastened among the curls on either side.

The doctor heard Mr. Brentwell speaking as in a dream; then becoming conscious of his apparent rudeness, he hastened to explain that Silas had accompanied him, and that he had forgotten him until that moment.

"I see that he is among friends, however," he added. "Who is that gentlemanly-looking young man who appears to be so interested in him?" The doctor asked this question with the faint hope that Mr. Brentwell would tell not only the name of the young man, but give the name and history of every one of the group, enlarging upon the history of the interesting young lady. But he simply replied, "He is my oldest son.

I believe that he has taken quite an interest in Silas Thorpe. I am glad to find that you have also, for he is a fine young man, and living in the same house with him you will have a good influence over him, and may be able to help him overcome his great timidity."

Here he was interrupted, just as he *might* have told the histories. A man of a farmer's appearance took the chair Mr. Nichols had vacated a few moments before. Mr. Brentwell introduced him as Mr. Johnson.

"How air you, sir?" he said, shaking the doctor's hand until his shoulder ached; "I'm glad, for one, that you've come to Newfield. How do you like our little town?"

"I think I shall like it very much, when I become more acquainted with it," replied Dr. St. James.

"So you're from Philadelphia?"

"That is my native city."

"I've been agoin' there some time; I've got a brother there. I s'pose you know him. He keeps a store on Germantown road—a large grocery store, nothing else but groceries. I believe they don't have dry goods mixed in in them city stores. So I hear, any how. I s'pose you know my brother?" the farmer continued, anxiously.

"I may have that pleasure. What is his name?"

"Johnson—William Johnson," returned the countryman earnestly, looking eagerly into the doctor's eyes.

"The name sounds familiar," said Dr. St. James, doubtfully.

Barker's—my father and eldest brother are bankers, the younger brother is a lawyer."

The doctor paused for breath. Mr. Green stared at him until his eyes seemed to be starting from their sockets. He was disappointed as well as astonished ; for he had anticipated "linked sweetness long drawn out," and here it was given him in one lump. Thurston, after the first excitement was over, sat silent, and stared also, forgetful of the world. The impressive silence lasted for full one minute, when the doctor recovered himself, and graciously said, by the way of conciliation, "I hope your wife and children are here ; I should like to meet them."

Mr. Green's eyes slowly went back into their sockets, his elbow came out of his knee—where it had certainly made an indenture, and he sat erect. "I have no wife," he replied, still staring ; "I never was married."

Thurston silently, and with indignation for the wasted time, arose, and made his way to the group he had watched with such longing eyes.

But he found to his great disappointment, when he joined them, that the young lady whose acquaintance he desired to make had left them ; she was sitting a little further away, talking to some neglected old ladies.

Silas welcomed him with a smile as he took a vacant chair, and introduced him to Christie, Lestie, and Horatio and Lestie's two youthful admirers, Van Pike and Lendrem.

"I have been trying for some time past to join you,"

said Thurston to Christie, whom he mistook to be the eldest, "and have just succeeded."

"You must expect that every one will want an introduction to you to-night," she returned, smiling; "you are quite the lion."

"Ah? I was not aware I was so honored, but I think I have been introduced to every one in the room."

"Every one, indeed!" said Lestie, who had drawn near to the fascinating stranger.

"I was wrong," he returned, glancing toward Daisy. "There *are* a few whom I've not yet met."

"You will soon enough," said Horatio (Thurston hoped he would.) "Here, sir," he added, taking Herbert's hand, "this is my brother Herbert."

Thurston shook hands with the boy, appearing as gratified as Herbert himself at the introduction.

Miss Morris, who had been absent from that corner a short time, now returned, accompanied by a gayly-clad young lady, whom she presented to Dr. St. James as Miss Van Pike. Herbert and Paul were despatched for more chairs, and they joined the group.

"Oh, my stars," cried Martha, when they were seated, "ain't this nice!"

"Oh, my moons," cried Paul, leaning over Lestie's chair, to her great annoyance, "ain't this bully!"

"Paul, Paul," cried his sisters in a breath.

"I'm your man," responded Paul, taking a blue ribbon bow from Lestie's hair with his teeth, and giving

it slyly to young Van Pike, who pinned it exultingly on his vest front.

“My ribbon !” cried Lestie. “Paul what do you mean ? Give it back to me Jim, it is all the blue ribbon I own.”

“You won’t be able to say that this time to-morrow,” returned Jim ; “you shall have a whole piece to pay for it.” Lendrem made a silent vow to give her *two* pieces of the broadest, brightest blue ribbon he could find in Newfield.

Lestie laughed, and thanked Jim.

“I had a very pleasant journey with your father last week in the cold,” the doctor said to Miss Van Pike. He felt that to be a very poor remark, but he must as a gentleman say something, and he had long since exhausted all original observations.

“Papa enjoyed it, I’m sure,” lisped Miss Van Pike, blushing violently and toying with the bracelet on her wrist, “though it was cold, I’m sure.”

“Oh, my stars, wasn’t it cold !” said Martha, who felt it her duty to aid the guests in their efforts at conversation.

“Oh, my moons, it was !” said Paul.

“Paul, *do* stop,” said Lestie, frowning.

“I stand corrected, Lest,” returned Paul, smiling graciously : “there ain’t but one moon, I know. Oh, my moon ! Martha.”

Martha giggled, and Miss Van Pike tittered ; Thurston laughed, and the sisters, notwithstanding their dis-

pleasure, followed his example : Horatio tried to frown ; but it all ended in such a hearty roar of laughter that every one turned and looked at them.

Paul clapped his hands, and told Martha familiarly that “it took them to do it.” At which Martha ejaculated chokingly. “Oh, my stars, ain’t you a boy !”

Paul, jumping on and off of the round of Lestie’s chair, replied : “Oh, my moon, I bet I am !”

The busy laughing and talking was going gayly on, when there came summons to the supper which had been laid in the kitchen.

Thurston gave his arm to Miss Van Pike, and followed Will Lendrem, who had possessed himself of Lestie, into that room.

When they were all seated around the bounteous board, Thurston’s eye turned in search of the fair unknown. She was seated at the opposite side of the table, a little below, with Horatio. “And so that is it, is it ?” he said to himself, judging that Horatio was an admirer of hers. “Well, Miss Abbie, you may set the day now, and I will be satisfied.” Yet he cast frequent glances down the table. “She has a terrible cough,” he thought at length, “and I might cure it if they called on me.”

Miss Van Pike did not prove to be a very entertaining companion ; she said little ; but that little she did say she was “sure” of—which every one is not.

When the supper was over the doctor conducted her back to the sitting-room, and finding her a pleasant seat excused himself, going in search of Mr. Brentwell,

with whom he had become greatly pleased. He found him conversing with Mr. Calfort.

"Well," said the lawyer when Mr. Brentwell had introduced them, "so we have a physician of our own again. How do you like Newfield?"

"I think the village is very pretty."

"But the people?" said Mr. Calfort, practically.

"I have met some whom I've liked very much," said the doctor, evasively.

"Have you met Mr. Green?"

Thurston replied that he had.

"Fine man," said Mr. Calfort, "One of our first men; what you would call a solid man."

"Understands what he is about," suggested the doctor.

"Precisely," responded the lawyer, "understands what he is about thoroughly."

"So I judged," said St. James, smiling quietly.

The party broke up soon after; for Newfield retired early.

"I shall soon call upon you," Mr. Brentwell said to Thurston as they shook hands.

"I shall be glad to receive you," said the doctor heartily. "I am at Miss Barker's."

Some one touched him on the shoulder at that moment, and turning, he saw Silas.

"Hang it!" said that youth, when he was certain no one overheard; "I've been trying all the evening to think of the form that etiquette book gave for asking

permission of a lady to accompany her home, and I can't remember it; it is so long. What shall I say?"

Thurston laughed.

"So much for your book. What shall you say? The fewest words possible." He gave a form.

"That is better than any book," Silas said; "but I never shall have courage to say it."

"Yes you will," said Thurston encouragingly; "you have done well to-night."

They separated. Silas went back to Christie, and astonished her by repeating the given words: it was more than she had hoped for. She accepted his attentions in a most charming manner, and fifteen minutes afterwards Silas was walking among the stars toward the rectory with Christie on his arm. What a short walk it was! They arrived at Christie's home just a hundred years too soon, but they arrived there nevertheless, and Silas went back alone with only the remembrance of a happy evening.

Thurston spent the next few minutes after he parted from Silas in searching for Mrs. Barker and Miss Amelia. He found them, at length, seated in the parlor in the midst of a group of old ladies, and with them he sat down. Mrs. Barker proudly introduced their boarder, and the doctor shook all the shrivelled old hands he could find.

"So you're the new doctor," said one old lady, who afterwards proved to be Mr. Nichol's wife. "How do you like Newfield?"

“Very well,” returned Thurston, calculating the cost of a placard to announce that fact to the inquiring anxious villagers.

“I believe he does,” said Mrs. Barker; “he appears so chirp all o’ the time, and hasn’t been the least bit home-sick.”

Thurston smiled, but he thought of a face far away, bordered with white curls, and he longed with a boyish longing to see it then.

CHAPTER XII.

“I love the Church—the holy Church,
The Saviour’s spotless bride ;
And oh, I love her palaces
Through all the world so wide.”

—BISHOP COXE.

THURSTON dreamt of angels in maroon with black curls and glittering wings that night ; and dreamt too that Miss Abbie Emerson would not allow him to be introduced to any one of them, advising him to return to Philadelphia if he wanted to see a true angel. He awoke vowing he never would.

Silas did not sleep ; so no dreams visited his pillow. When he first retired he was in a state bordering on bliss, thinking over every word that Christie had spoken ; but when he thought of his own clumsy replies, he grew heartsick, and the more he thought of them the worse they seemed to him : he wondered how she had tolerated his presence, and thought how entirely unselfish she must have been ever to have allowed him to accompany her home. Oh, why had he not said this or that, instead of what he had said ? How much better it would have sounded ! By the time morning dawned, he so regretted his rash conduct and silly words that he vowed never to behold Christie Brentwell’s face again, and felt certain that she would be well pleased if she knew of that resolve.

Lestie spent the greater part of the next day in describing to Daisy the new doctor's charms, repeating at intervals of five minutes, "Oh, you ought to have been introduced to him!" Christie and Horatio joined in the chorus as she sung his praises, and occasionally Mr. Brentwell came in with a solo. The boys indicated their approval of him in a few but highly expressive words, which are to be found only in boy-dialect. As neither Mrs. Brentwell nor Daisy had made his acquaintance they were the audience.

Miss Crissy Wells had gone to the quilting with the fixed determination of becoming acquainted with Dr. St. James, and inquiring after a third cousin, who—it had been reported—had moved to Philadelphia some years before; she did not believe the report, but she felt quite certain that he would know. But her courage had failed her when the moment arrived; she dared not approach the distinguished stranger. But curiosity overcame her fear, and on the following Friday afternoon she started to call on Mrs. Barker and Miss Amelia, and see the doctor if possible.

Fortune favors the brave; Thurston was not only at home, but was in the sitting-room with the ladies.

Mrs. Barker admitted her, and gave her an exceedingly formal introduction to the doctor. Then the widow began the conversation, and kept it up unaided, until Miss Crissy gaining courage ventured her first remark.

"How do you like Newfield?" she earnestly inquired of the doctor.

"I like it," he said smilingly

"How long have you been here?"

"I came a week ago to-day."

"I hear that you live in Philadelphia."

"I did; but I consider Newfield my home now."

"I heard that a cousin of my mother's," she went on, "has moved to Philadelphia. Is it so?"

"I really cannot say."

"I thought you would know her," said Miss Crissy, greatly disappointed.

"What is her name?" Thurston asked, regretting that the Directory of that city was not in his library.

"Carwell," returned Miss Crissy, with hope.

"I am not acquainted with any one by that name," acknowledged Thurston.

"I thought you *must* know Ann Carwell!"

"Know her!" cried Mrs. Barker; "why he don't even know my daughter Jessie."

"Well, I never!" said Miss Crissy, "I reckon you don't go out much to home."

"A great deal," replied Dr. St. James, both amused and vexed; "I have a large circle of acquaintances in the city."

"You don't say! and you don't know my third cousin, Ann Carwell?"

Thurston, with "Mr. Wm. Johnson" yet on his conscience, could only reply in the negative. Fortunately there was a call at the office door for him at that moment; some one was ill—and he thankfully hastened away.

Miss Wells remained some time longer both hearing and repeating news. At length, when every one in Newfield had been spoken of—some merely noticed, and others receiving more lengthened attention and criticism, she took her departure.

She had been gone but a few moments when a loud knock sounded at the office door.

“Who’s dead now?” cried Mrs. Barker. Miss Amelia hastened to open it. It was Mr. Brentwell. He had called to see the doctor, and declining to enter the sitting-room, he seated himself in the office to await his return. Miss Amelia closed the connecting door, and the clergyman with true village curiosity surveyed the furniture of the apartment. Mrs. St. James had purchased the greater part of this, and sent it to Newfield without her son’s knowledge. It had arrived there the day after he did—to his great surprise and delight too, when he found what furniture the village store afforded.

The doctor had visited his patient, and taken a short walk through the village, hoping to see the unknown lady, and was rewarded for his pains by meeting her face to face; and not only that, an obliging gust of wind had come rushing up the street at that moment, and laid her veil low at his feet. So he had had the great pleasure of picking it up and presenting it to her with one of his elegant bows. And she had smiled her sweetest smile as she thanked him.

He was surprised and pleased to find Mr. Brentwell seated in his office, on his return.

“I am glad,” he said as he greeted him, “that you have called at such an early hour. You have been entertaining yourself in my absence I see,” referring to a medical work the clergyman held in his hand.

“Yes ; and I was really interested.”

“It is a most valuable work,” said Dr. St. James. “There are five volumes in the set.” He brought them from the shelves and laid them on the table.

“A recent publication ?” Mr. Brentwell said, examining them.

“Quite recent.”

“We are very much behind the times in everything in Newfield I own ; but I had no idea how very far we were behind in medicine until I read that work this afternoon. Dr. Doreann was a very skilful physician, but”—he paused.

The doctor went on, “But he was a very old gentleman—over seventy-six. He probably studied over fifty years ago. Medical science at that time and to-day are two different things ; there are constant discoveries in drugs, and new inventions in surgical instruments. Dr. Doreann belonged to the same school that I do, but I find that my treatment of some cases is so very different from his that there are persons who have no faith in my medical knowledge, thinking it all ignorance on my part.”

“I believe,” said Mr. Brentwell, “that Newfield would have swallowed any imaginable dose he could have prepared for them. He attended them for half a century ; he has cured—or killed—grandparents,

parents, and children. So in advancing new theories you have a great deal to contend with."

"Nevertheless I shall advance them, for to tell the truth I know very little of those last century prescriptions and remedies, nor would any other physician whom they could have gotten here. I had anticipated hearing objections to my being unmarried however; for it is generally the first complaint."

"Dr. Doreann was never married. Perhaps that accounts for it."

"Indeed! I am surprised to hear that. How came Newfield to tolerate medical celibacy?"

"They had no control over the doctor. He was once to have been married to a lady in Fairhope, but the engagement was broken. He was high spirited and jealous: she was something of a flirt: some one made mischief between them, and there it ended."

There was a low knock on the door leading into the sitting-room at that moment. Thurston arose and opened it. Mrs. Barker's withered face appeared.

"No, I can't come in," she said in reply to the doctor's invitation to do so. "I just come to ask after Daisy. I haven't seen her in a long time. 'Melie said that she was at Mis' Morris' quilting on Tuesday, but there was so many folks there that I did not see her. Don't she go out much nowadays?"

"She was to take a short walk to-day," returned Mr. Brentwell; "but she seldom goes out."

"Well, she ain't any worse?"

“Oh, no worse.”

“Take heart then ; here’s the new doctor now ; he’ll soon have her well again. I just wanted to ask about her—that’s all, good bye,” and the door closed after her.

“Is one of your family ill ?” St. James asked as he resumed his seat.

“My eldest daughter is delicate : we fear consumption.”

“Allow me to offer my services to you,” said the doctor. “Do not hesitate to call upon me at any time—as you called on Dr. Doreann.”

Mr. Brentwell thanked him sincerely, and a great weight went off of his heart. Daisy certainly needed a physician’s attention, and he had thought many times of the doctor’s bill he would have to pay now, and had talked to Christie about it.

“I was hoping,” said he when they had finished talking about Daisy’s illness, “that Dr. Doreann’s successor would fill his place in St. Paul’s.”

“Well,” Thurston said laughing, “to tell you the truth, I think Dr. Doreann’s ideas of medicine were much sounder than those he had of church doctrine. I for one am in no way partial to the memory of Henry VIII, and am not able to believe in the church he founded.”

This was a challenge that Mr. Brentwell could not resist. He lived in a country-place where he rarely met men with whom he could discuss theology, and he was particularly fond of doing so ; and he imagined he saw in Thurston one whom he might easily convert to

his faith, so he spent many hours that afternoon endeavoring to do it. In the end he really made an impression.

Thurston was so much interested that he invited the clergyman to remain to tea and continue it, but Mr. Brentwell declined, saying his family would expect him, and wait for him.

When he was gone the doctor found a little prayer-book that he had been using as a reference lying upon his desk. He took it up and turned the leaves carelessly, lingering one moment over the delicately written "Daisy Brentwell from her brother Horatio," on the fly leaf. "Silas," he said, at the tea table, "how can you have so much faith in a church which was founded by Henry VIII?"

"Henry Theight!" interposed Mrs. Barker; "I've heerd he was the first 'piscopal. Does he live in Philadelphia?"

CHAPTER XIII.

“Awake, my soul, stretch every nerve,
And press with vigor on :
A heavenly race demands thy zeal,
And an immortal crown.”

—HYMNAL.

THE doctor's practice increased daily ; Newfield was gaining confidence in him, although his treatment was widely different from what Dr. Doreann's had been.

He was not able to attend morning service on the following Sunday, owing to his many patients ; and he had scarcely finished the long list at near twelve o'clock when he found himself at the Baptist house of worship. He decided, however, to leave the few remaining ones until afternoon, and finish the morning by attending the closing services there, being perhaps in time to hear a portion of the sermon. He had a two-fold object in entering ; it would show a friendly spirit and encourage Baptist patients, and secondly and mainly, the “fair unknown”—Daisy—might be a Baptist, and he might see her there, and not only see her but be introduced to her by her father—some kind hearted old gentleman, whose acquaintance he had doubtless made ere this—and he would be invited to call, and he *would* call, and—but he had entered, and was fast finding out

that the fine castles he was building were without the least foundation.

He seated himself by Mrs. Barker, to her infinite delight; and Miss Amelia too, smiled approvingly. A glance sufficed: Daisy, as we well know, was not there. He was disappointed it is true; but on seeing no nice old gentleman there worthy of being her father he was somewhat consoled, and gave his undivided attention to the sermon.

Mr. Calfort came over to him when the services were concluded, extending a welcoming hand.

“We are glad to see you here,” he said, drawing up his little figure to its most commanding height, and looking condescendingly up to St. James; “Yes, very glad, sir, very glad, although I *do* hear that you are—ahem—you are a Presbyterian in your faith.”

“You hear the truth,” he said, smiling; “I am a Presbyterian.”

“Sorry to hear you corroborate it, sir; I was hoping to hear that it was as false—as false—as false as”—here Mr. Calfort was interrupted by a large woman in purple, who stood just behind him, giving sundry small kicks and elbow pokes, and by three young ladies in blue, who also gave him gentle reminders that they desired and demanded an introduction to the distinguished stranger. Mr. Calfort introduced the large lady in purple as “Mrs. Calfort, my wife,” to “Dr. St. James, the new physician,” and the three young ladies in blue, as his “amiable daughters.” Thurston shook the four

flabby hands which were extended to him with his usual warmth of manner ; and this warmth of manner made Mrs. Calfort think he had mistaken her hand for one of her daughters', and made the hearts of each and every one of the damsels in blue beat fast. And the damsels themselves began then and there to dream dreams of the consequences of love at first sight. But afterward, on comparing notes, they decided that he was a desperate flirt, and that it would not be of any use for him to try to flirt with either of them ! After having thus cruelly decided his fate and hardened their young hearts against him, they appointed a committee, consisting of the youngest and most hard-hearted daughter, to wait upon papa and ask him to invite the doctor round to tea right soon, and unfeelingly decided that they would wear their plaid dresses and pink ribbons on that occasion.

Solid Mr. Green, an energetic member of the society, passed Thurston, as he stood talking to Mr. Calfort and family, with scarcely a nod of recognition ; but the grocer was strong, healthy and a bachelor—so St. James was not troubled.

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There had been a large congregation and a long sermon at St. Paul's, and a late dinner at the rectory ; but now it was over. Daisy and Christie had washed the dinner dishes ; Lestie had restored the sitting-room to its usual tidy state ; Horatio had brought a huge dish of apples from the cellar ; Herbert had cracked an equal

quantity of nuts ; and now that all the work was done they were seated by the window with their mother in their midst, enjoying the nuts and apples and a quiet afternoon together.

“Mother,” Horatio said when all Sunday topics were talked over—and the worlds were left for the world’s days—“Mother, why do you never tell us any stories nowadays ?”

“Stories, my son ?”

“Yes, mother ; don’t you remember the allegories you used to tell us on Sunday afternoons ?” said Daisy ; “and how fond we were of them, and how impatient we always were for Sunday to come to hear another ?”

“I remember them,” said Christie. “I used to sit on mother’s knee, and Horatio held Lestie.”

“Yes,” added Lestie, “and I remember we all three of us had blue plaid dresses for Sunday, and Daisy had three rows of velvet on hers, while Christie and I only had two.”

“I don’t remember anything about them,” said Paul.

“Of course you don’t ; you were only a baby,” said Lestie condescendingly.

“I wasn’t a baby,” shouted Paul. “I never was a baby ; was I, mother ?”

Paul’s weak point was his youth. It was the one disgrace of his life : and Lestie well aware of this weakness, and knowing of the disgrace, never lost any opportunity of alluding to it.

She laughed.

“Never was a baby ! Oh, ain’t you a goose ! you’re a baby now. Old Mrs. Blake called you a baby the other day. She was asking after Paul, the baby !”

“*I’ll kill Mrs. Wake,*” said Paul darkly, doubling his fist.

“Paul, Paul,” cried Mrs. Brentwell.

“*I will,*” he reiterated ; “I’ll kill her dog Ponto.”

“Why, boy alive,” said Horatio, “Washington was once an infant, and so was the president. Think of that and take comfort.”

Paul replied by bursting into tears. They may have been tears of anger, but they were more likely caused by grief on finding out that these great men had once been *only infants*—certainly all the veneration he had once felt for them ceased from that moment forevermore.

Daisy drew him toward her caressingly, while Lestie laughed. “You make him worse, Daisy,” the latter said.

“Children,” Mrs. Brentwell said in her sweet voice, “when you are all quiet I will tell you a short story.”

“I knew that thunder storm would bring a story from mother,” said Herbert contentedly, resting his elbows on her lap and leaning his chin on his hands. “Proceed.”

“Paul, my son, take your hands from your eyes and dry your tears. Where is your handkerchief ?”

“Hain’t got none.”

“If you talk English, you may have mine,” said Christie.

“Do talk English,” he muttered, taking the handkerchief ungraciously.

“Now we’re ready, mother,” Horatio said when Paul, with red but dry eyes and besmeared face, sat upright, and prepared to take his place in the world as a good-but-old boy.

“I will tell you a story,” Mrs. Brentwell began, “that I read many years ago in a little book my grandmother owned. I have forgotten a great deal of it; but still it will serve to illustrate a few truths, and I hope impress them on your hearts. It is entitled

“THE ICY RIVER.”

“It was a bright winter’s morning in a far distant country. The sun threw genial rays on the glistening snow that covered the banks of the River of Ice, and seemed to promise a long, fair day. Groups of children were sporting in its warmth upon these banks; sporting as though the bright day had been made for no other purpose; as though the kind rays were given only to illumine a playground—a playground where they would linger forever. And they were fast forgetting that they were far from Home, and that they must reach that Home—their Father’s Home—before the sun set; or the gates would be forever barred against them, and a voice—the voice of their ever forgiving Father—would proclaim that He knew them not. Yes, they were forgetting this—but not all; a few hearts remembered with fear that they knew not the hour when the night would overtake them, when the sun they now rejoiced in, might set and leave them in utter darkness, where there

would be no longer idle sports and play, but wailing and gnashing of teeth ; a few others remembered their Father's love, and their own hearts beat in eager response, and they longed to be wrapt in His embrace and hear Him say : ' Well done, good and faithful child, enter now into thy joy ! ' The joys which their Elder Brother, the Prince, had prepared for them—joys the least of which made all their sports now seem but vain, lagging and dull tasks, a weary seeking after happiness that was not, that could not be found away from Home. Still they lingered. The more careless ones tried with merry sallies and laughing words to drive all thoughts of their Father from their hearts. The frozen River, which was the path to the Mansion, the only path the children might tread when they sought their Father's abode, was cold, and so slippery that one could scarcely gain a foothold, and when that foothold was gained, they must go on, on, without once pausing for rest or to look behind, *for it was impossible to stand still for one moment upon the ice* ; it must be onward, onward, or backward. The instant they paused, when the journey was begun, they would slide back, back, even past the starting point, and with greater rapidity than it ever had been possible for them to go forward, and they would go swiftly to destruction. Their Father had foreseen this, and had given them each a staff to aid and support them in their journey, and to help them recover their footing when they lost it.

“ The sun rose higher in the sky, the morn was fast

going and noon approaching ; but still their voices rang out in the quiet, clear air, and were echoed and re-echoed by the surrounding hills.

“But at length one, a tall manly youth, forsook the enticing sports, calling to his comrades :

“‘Come, comrades, it is time for us to set upon our journey. Let us forsake these sports, and prepare to seek our Father’s house. We should have been on the way hours ago.’

“‘Nonsense !’ another cried, ‘there is plenty of time ; the sun cannot set in many a long hour. See ! it scarcely is more than risen.’

“‘Yes,’ returned Mario, ‘but we know not the hour when—’

“‘Come, comrade,’ said a third, ‘don’t cast shadows over us by reminding of dark things, and by talking of impossibilities ; leave that to girlish Silvio. *You* be a man.’

“‘A ‘man’ would go now,’ Mario said, ‘would go when duty and when a loving Father calls. I hear His voice and I will obey. Ando, will you come with me ?’

“‘I ! Indeed I will not. For what was the bright morn given us if not for sport ? I shall stay and enjoy it, and this afternoon I shall start and run every step of the way, and get there long enough before you do.’

“‘The sun is not two hours up,’ said he who first replied to Mario, ‘if it is that. Come, Mario, remain with us yet a while ; there is no pleasure when you are away !’

“ ‘Ah, Salmund!’ said Mario gravely, laying his hand on his comrade’s shoulder, ‘tempt me not to linger; too long already have I done so; too many morning hours have I squandered; I must be doing my Father’s will. Come with me—why delay? The night will soon be upon us. When we least dream of it we shall be engulfed in eternal darkness. Eternal, eternal; for we never shall escape. Believe me, comrades, no man knoweth the hour when the night of death draweth nigh?’ ”

“ ‘Nonsense!’ retorted Ando, ‘there is not so much danger as all that. I tell you that sun can’t set for hours; nor need you try to frighten me into going.’ ”

“ ‘Not frighten you, Ando,—no, no; neither you nor any of the comrades, but for the love of Our Father I pray you go. Think of the great love He bears’— ”

“ ‘If He loved us,’ interrupted Ando, ‘He would have made another road for us to travel, not that slippery way. Why, Mario, you see yourself that it is almost impossible to take one step forward!’ ”

“ ‘We might well say that,’ returned Mario, ‘if our Elder Brother, His dearly beloved Son, had not trodden the way before us, and showed us that it is possible. But I must not linger. Is there no one who will come with me?’ He looked sadly around on the bright faces of his comrades; for he loved them well.”

“ Silvio came to his side.

“ ‘I will go with you,’ he said, ‘if you will help me when I falter.’ ”

“ ‘Gladly will I do all that I can, dear Silvio,’ said Mario, kindly ; ‘but you must lean hard on the staff our Father has given you and find strength. Salmund,’ he continued, turning to his best loved companion, ‘will you not come too ?’

“ ‘The few words Mario had spoken to Ando had deeply impressed Salmund, and he fain would have followed him, but he felt that he could not relinquish the games of his comrades. He preferred rather to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season ; though the season might be short and the punishment eternal. ‘Mario,’ he said, hesitatingly, ‘you know that I love you much, and cannot endure to be parted from you ; I truly do not know what to do.’

“ ‘Come with me,’ entreated Mario. ‘Come, but not for the love you bear me, but for the love you have for our Father.’

“ ‘Oh, I love Him, of course !’ Salmund said, lightly ; ‘but you know I love you much. I believe,’ he added, after a moment’s thought, ‘that I will go with you, Mario ; I will try it.’

“ Mario embraced him.

“ ‘Where is your staff ?’ he asked, as they were setting out.

“ ‘I really do not know : I have not used it in some time,’ said Salmund, carelessly.

“ ‘Salmund ! Salmund ! is it true that you have not used the staff of late ?’

“ ‘There, don’t mind it so : I shall find it soon.

‘Where could I have laid it? you know,’ he added, ‘that one’s staff is not necessary at all times.’

“‘Indeed it is,’ answered Mario: ‘we are commanded to use it without ceasing. It should never be out of our hands.’

“‘Well, well, I’m sorry now that I lost sight of it; but I was so taken up with the sports that I entirely forgot it. Ah! here it is once more. Now I am ready. I wonder if I can keep up.’

“‘If you lean hard on the staff,’ whispered timid Silvio; ‘it will strengthen you.’

“‘Brothers, farewell,’ said Mario, tearfully.

“‘This is no farewell at all,’ responded Ando, confidently; ‘we will set out this afternoon, and soon be up with you.’

“The three started on their journey. Mario leaned boldly on his staff; Silvio tremblingly grasping his and caught unto Mario’s garments, while Salmund walked in his own strength, and went for the love he bore his comrade and not his Father.

“‘Mario,’ he said, at length, ‘you can never doubt my love for you.’

“‘I have never doubted it, dear Salmund.’

“‘Nay, but look how I love you. I could not let you leave me for one brief hour, but come with you even on this journey.’

“‘I pray you,’ Mario said, earnestly, ‘not to say that it is your love for me that brought you on this journey, but say rather it was love for our—’

“‘Look!’ cried the other interrupting him, and pointing to a flock of birds which were flying in the air. ‘Look, look at the birds.’

“They stopped—they ceased their onward journey, and thoughtlessly gazed. But Silvio still leaning on his staff, casting not one glance behind him, went tremblingly on.

“The others were so enwrapt, watching the flight of the beautiful birds, that it was some moments before they felt that they were going swiftly backwards. Mario was the first to perceive it. He grasped his staff tighter in his hand, and vainly endeavored to find a hold for it in the ice.

“‘See where we are going, Salmund,’ he cried; and even as he spoke, he heard the jeering voices of his late companions as they passed them on the shore. ‘Oh, my Father!’ he groaned, ‘be merciful unto me.’

“‘See! see! there they go,’ cried Salmund, still intent upon the birds.

“‘Salmund,’ he cried again with all his strength, ‘leave the birds. Look! we are going swiftly back.’ And Mario, leaning heavily upon his staff, started slowly forward. But Salmund, still intent upon the birds, went back, back. At length when they had flown from his sight, he saw that he had lost more than he had gained, and his beloved Mario was far ahead of him, and his heart was troubled.

“‘Mario,’ he cried, ‘what shall I do? Mario, Mario, hear me!’

“ ‘Lean upon your staff,’ came Mario’s voice, faint in the distance. ‘Lean hard, Salmund, and our Father will help you ; for He loves you. Hasten ! delay not ; for we have lost much, and the day is far spent.’

“ And Salmund did hasten, leaning with all his strength upon his staff, casting himself upon it, as did Silvio.

“ ‘Ah, Mario !’ he said when he had joined his companions, ‘you have seen how truly I love you. I have suffered all this for your sake.’

“ ‘I pray you,’ Mario said gravely, ‘do not go on this journey for my sake ; it is useless. I love you, dear brother, but what is my love in comparison to our Father’s ? Could my love have turned your steps, and brought you back ?’

“ ‘Nay, Mario, that it could not.’

“ ‘Was it not our Father who held you up ? Were you not strengthened when you leaned upon your staff ?’

“ ‘Upon my much neglected staff ! Ah, indeed I was. Had it not been for that I see now that I could never have regained my place with you and Silvio ; for I was very weak and greatly terrified.’

“ ‘We are nothing without the staff,’ said Silvio.

“ ‘Nothing, nothing,’ rejoined Mario. ‘And,’ he added, ‘ever lean on it as you did in that moment of peril.’

“ ‘I will, if you desire so, Mario—’

“ ‘If I !’ Mario cried. ‘Oh, not I ! but our Father. All is useless, useless if it is for me. Better that you

were still sporting on the bank than thus deceiving yourself. Do you not remember that He is jealous? that He will be loved above all others?’

“ ‘Yes, yes, I remember.’

“ ‘And remember His mercy, His loving kind’—

“ ‘Mario, I *do* love Him: but can I not love you also?’ Salmund interrupted.

“ ‘Aye, indeed; but Him the best.’

“ ‘When I left our comrades,’ Salmund went on, ‘it was for your sake alone I came, but since He has saved me from such destruction I have learned to love Him first and above all others; be no longer anxious.’

“ Mario and Silvio embraced him.

“ So the three journeyed on together, talking of their Father and Elder Brother who had gone on before them. There were many backslidings, but with the aid of their staves they would go on their way again rejoicing.

“ The day was drawing to a close, and they were near home when Salmund said, ‘Ah, that Ando and our comrades had journeyed with us. I fear they will never reach our Father’s house!’

“ ‘I fear it also,’ Mario said. And it was even so. Ando and his companions whiled the morning hours away in games. Noon came, but still enraptured they lingered. The River was glaring and cold, and the sun shining warm upon them seemed scarcely nearer setting than when it first rose.

“ ‘Plenty of time,’ Ando would say. ‘We will overtake them yet.’ ‘Plenty of time,’ he said as the after-

noon crept on. 'Plenty of time ; we will have one more game before we start.' And as he spoke, the sun, which had shone so bright and warm the moment before, sank behind the hills, and they were left to perish in the darkness.

"And where were Mario, Silvio and Salmund then ? On they had hastened to their Home, and as the sun sank behind the hills, they entered the pearly gates."

"Is that all ?" Paul asked as she paused.

"Yes, my darling boy, that is all. And I want to hear Lestie and Paul explain it."

"I can explain it," said Lestie quickly.

"The staff was Prayer. I knew that all the time."

"And what verse in the Bible was my text—as your father would say—Paul ?"

"'Thou shalt have no other God before me,'" he answered pompously, sitting erect that it might be more effective.

"Not exactly. I wanted to impress on your minds that it is impossible to stand still in our Christian life ; we must either grow in grace, or fall back. This is a solemn thought, my children. Every moment we live, and every little deed we do, has an influence on the whole of eternity. And we should pause before every act, and ask ourselves whether it will strengthen us in our growth or retard us ; whether it is for the Saviour or against him, remembering that it is surely one or the other."

"Mother," cried Herbert, "I know the verse. It is 'He that is not with Me is against Me.'"

“Yes, dear, that is it.”

Paul leaned his head on Daisy's knee and wept, regretting his sins in general, and his promise to spend the following afternoon at Sam Luken's hut in particular.

Lestie looked carelessly out of the window; neither the allegory nor the moral had taken any hold upon her heart.

CHAPTER XIV.

“O with due reverence let us all
To God’s abode repair.”

—HYMNAL.

DR. ST. JAMES had once thought of describing the appearance of the “fair unknown” to Mrs. Barker, and of asking, not only her name, but her life—her heart-history; but upon second thought—the thought world-renowned for wisdom—he concluded that it would be almost as unwise a proceeding as to call a meeting of the towns-people, and make inquiries of that assembly. Neither would he ask Silas or Miss Amelia; so he waited, determining to make all possible private investigations. He had already seen that she was neither a Presbyterian nor Baptist; there was no Methodist house of worship in Newfield; so he determined to visit St. Paul’s that evening. Silas was well pleased to have him accompany him, and they started long before the usual time. There were but few in the church when they entered, and their faces the doctor eagerly scanned. While Silas was offering a silent prayer, and was preparing his mind for the service, Thurston watched the people as they entered with great interest. Mrs. Brentwell came with the younger children; Christie and Lestie went into the choir which adjoined the chancel. A

little later Horatio entered with Daisy—Daisy herself, looking as quietly pretty to Thurston as ever, and unheeding the anxious blue eyes that followed her, as she walked slowly up the aisle by her brother's side. Horatio left her at the pew door, and hastening into the choir he began to play the voluntary.

Thurston knew now that they were lovers—a youthful pair: Horatio was no more than a boy! and she was not *too* young to be loved by a *man*—and to have chosen a boy!

How divinely Horatio played! How grandly the organ pealed forth sweet music, low flute-like murmurings, and deep muffled thunderings! Down the broad aisle through the dimly lighted church it floated, shutting out from the thoughts of the gathered worshippers all the world's memories, filling each heart with love, tuning each spirit to one great hymn of praise, preparing them, heart and spirit, to unite in the solemn worship of their Creator and Redeemer. The light shone softly on the altar cross throwing its shadow over the youthful organist, falling a blessing in sad disguise, inspiring him with music almost seraphic; for the keys he pressed seemed to tell in one great chord of the love and mercy, the suffering triumph of that cross; and, when the lights grew brighter, and the shadow deepened, the tones were more inspiring—there was deeper love in them; the mercy grew more tender; the suffering more intense, thrilling each heart with its agony; and the triumph—that glorious triumph—grew yet more glorious.

When Mr. Brentwell entered, robed in priestly garments, every heart was prepared to unite with him in silent prayer, to give utterance to the prayers and praises Horatio had played, and to join with whole hearts in the service that followed.

Silas found the places in the prayer-book for the doctor, and aided him during the service. Perhaps it was owing to this, or perhaps to the conversation he had had with Mr. Brentwell on the subject—Thurston could not tell which—but he was more impressed with the service, and understood it better than ever before. He even added “Amen” several times with the others.

When the service was over, Silas joined Christie, leaving the doctor to the mercy of the eager crowd of newly-made friends, who gathered around him. Thurston was hoping that some one of these friendly villagers would, in a moment of compassion, introduce him to the unknown fair, and so lingered willingly, but, alas for his hopes!

Horatio joined her again, and they left the church together. It is a shame to relate that Thurston greeted the brother coolly that evening.

“Oh, my stars!” said a voice at his elbow, “are you here?”

Thinking that she might have asked for information, he replied that he was; and Miss Morris, well satisfied that it was not his wraith, passed on, leaning on the arm of her escort.

St. Paul’s had, as all well regulated churches have,

a church-beau. This is an unmarried gentleman, who makes it his business to pay polite attention to any young lady belonging to the congregation who may be unattended. Moffatt was repaid for his services by the smiles and tender glances of the grateful ladies, a pair of highly embroidered slippers, or a butterfly neck-tie made by their own fairy fingers—and he felt himself well repaid. At first it might be thought that he had no heart, to be able thus to withstand the charms of so many fair ones. Not so : so far from having no heart at all, that member was so immense that it contained the image of every young lady in St. Paul's, and not one had powers of attraction sufficient to gain the whole of it. Each one had her own private little corner, and there she must remain contented. A heart, we must remember, is never our own until we have *entire* possession, be it large or small, and we must remember too that there are no hard hearts—as love goes—in the world, that they are large or small. A small one is quickly won, and is capable of little love, but a large heart withstands all ordinary charms, requiring much, and requiring many. But at length when it yields to one, great is the yielding thereof ! And this was Andrew's heart.

His heart was large as his body was small. He had a little round face, with two little round cheeks that bloomed like two rosy apples ; one little round nose, two little round eyes, and a round chin that vied with the cheeks in their bloom ; a little round waist which was

well covered with a gayly-flowered vest. His hair was brushed so smoothly away from his blooming cheeks and rounded forehead that a fly would have slipped, and doubtless been fatally wounded in attempting a promenade thereon. His hands were little and round, and on all possible occasions were incased in neat cotton gloves, the backs of which were artistically embroidered with divers colored threads. He invariably wore plaid pants, bright neck-tie, bottle-green coat and a tan-colored overcoat, and his feet were as respectable as little feet always are. And as for his character and standing, half the church would have vouched for his being an estimable young man, one who was well-fitted for the honorable office of church-beau. It was one of his manifold duties to escort one young lady, at least, home from service on Sunday evening, and here he acquitted himself well. He was, in short, an honor to the fraternity.

On the Sunday evening of which we write, Miss Martha was the favored one—for it was her turn ; and so it was on Andrew Moffatt's arm she was leaning when she greeted Thurston. It was one of Mr. Moffatt's peculiarities—or better, his virtues—to offer the selected young lady his round little arm at her own pew door. So no one could ever say that he omitted one requisite of being an estimable young man, a well-bred church-beau.

Thurston was leaving the church when Herbert Brentwell hastened after him, and asked him to wait : his father and mother wished to speak to him ; and in a

few moments they joined them. The doctor was introduced to Mrs. Brentwell, who invited him to spend the following Thursday afternoon with them, and to take tea. Thurston politely accepted the invitation, at the same time requesting permission to bring Silas.

“To think that I should have forgotten him,” said Mrs. Brentwell, reproaching herself. “To be sure, you must bring him ; and tell him we sent the invitation.”

CHAPTER XV.

“Blessed are the merciful ; for they shall obtain mercy.”

—ST. MATT. CHAP. V. 7.

THE door of Mrs. Barker's kitchen was unceremoniously opened and Mrs. Pepper entered. Miss Amelia looked up from the dishes she was washing, to greet her, and Mrs. Barker paused in the discourse on the cushion she was making for the largest rocking-chair.

“I walked right in,” Mrs. Pepper kindly informed them ; “I never stand on ceremony.”

“That's right,” rejoined Mrs. Barker. “'Melie, push her the big rocker. It sets right well since we had it mended. Silas he broke it the other night. He rocked too far and over he went. I thought at first he was dead, and I blessed my stars that we had a doctor in the house ; but he wasn't even hurt.”

Mrs. Pepper, having seated herself in the renowned chair, was closely watching Miss Amelia's movements.

“What's that,” she cried as that lady was putting away the napkins, “that silver thing ?”

“The doctor's napkin ring,” the widow explained, with the least possible pride at her superior knowledge.

“My, ain't it handsome !” cried Mrs. Pepper, turning it over and over in her fingers. “And he's even got

his name written on it. They must be stylish at home, for that cost a heap o' money."

"That's so," said widow Barker. "I know all about it; for Silas took such a fancy to it that he sent to the city for one. And it cost ten dollars and wasn't half so elegant."

Miss Amelia then displayed Silas's.

"My! my!" groaned Mrs. Pepper, examining them both and comparing their respective merits. "What a waste o' money. I s'pose they're awful rich though. Ain't the doctor a mite proud?"

"Not a mite," said Mrs. Barker; "he sits down along with us, and talks and laughs as friendly as you do. No, there ain't anything stuck up about him. And Silas—why you haven't any idea of the change that has come over him since the doctor came! He ain't any thing like as bashful."

And then the ladies fell to talking about Silas-before-the-doctor-came and Silas-after-the-doctor-came: notes were compared, and opinions freely given.

"I was in Mr. Green's store to-day," Mrs. Pepper said, at length; "and we got to talking about the doctor. Mr. Green he says that he thinks that he is a desperate character; he can't make anything out of him, but he thinks he's been in prison sometime, and is trying to hide it from folks in Newfield."

The indignation of the two ladies was beyond bounds.

"That Green," cried the widow, "is the biggest liar in town. Now, 'Melie we'll never buy another cent's

worth of him ; we'll go up to Lute's on Alling road. I don't care if it is a long walk. What did you say Mis' Pepper, when he said that ?”

“I only said, ‘Do tell,’” returned Mrs. Pepper ; “for, you see, I didn't know but what there might be something true in it, and if there was, you know, it would have been telling a story for me to contradict it.”

“Well, I would have contradicted it,” said Miss Amelia.

“I'll tell the doctor the first thing,” said Mrs. Barker.

“No, Mary, it might hurt his feelings,” said Miss Amelia.

Mrs. Pepper changed the subject of the conversation by asking if they were going to attend the church-meeting that evening.

“It is quite time,” she said ; “for it begins at seven, and now it lacks only twenty minutes. I like to be there in season.”

Miss Amelia, having finished the dish-washing, brought her own and her sister-in-law's bonnets and shawls into the kitchen, where they unceremoniously donned them ; and Mrs. Pepper, far from feeling that they had taken a liberty, freely commented upon their manufacture and material, to which Mrs. Barker readily replied by giving a complete and separate history of each of them. Miss Amelia gave over the safe keeping of the house into Silas's hands, and they departed for the meeting. On their way Mrs. Pepper instructed them that they were to vote in favor of cutting down the minister's salary

two hundred dollars per annum, hoping by these means to send him away ; Mr. Calfort had been talking it around, she said, and every one thought it would be carried.

There were a few other matters discussed in the meeting before the subject of the salary was mentioned. Three youths who aspired to join them were examined : two passed and were voted in, but the third, either from failure in his examination, or on account of Mr. Green's electioneering against him, was voted out. And as it afterward proved that the said youth had escorted Sallie Loomis home from meeting on three successive Sunday evenings, and that Mr. Green was not once allowed that pleasure, the blame was laid on the grocer's able and determined electioneering.

When these were disposed of a new fence was spiritedly discussed, a new shed was voted to be erected and a few new panes of glass entered. Then came the business of the evening. Mr. Calfort rose, threw back his head, clasped his hands behind his back and began to speak eloquently on the subject of church finances, and on the vanities of this world, commingling the two in a most artistic manner. For some time, however, no connection was seen, but Mr. Calfort like a true lawyer brought it out in a most marvellous manner by explaining that it was impossible to pay Mr. Borne six hundred dollars per annum while the treasury of the church was in such a low state, and in consequence Mr. Borne and family would be obliged to indulge in a few less vanities of this world and useless luxuries—the evil

results of which the lawyer had just shown. Having rubbed the back of his head vigorously during this discourse he sat down well satisfied that he had accomplished his end.

Mr. Borne arose.

“Sisters and brothers,” he began—“Sisters and brothers, you have listened to an able—a remarkable speech by Brother Calfort, our Deacon. It is true that the finances of the church are in a low state—it is true—but I cannot plead guilty—indeed I have not indulged in unnecessary—in luxuries”—he faltered, but one glance at the pale face of his wife drove him on an almost desperation, and for the once his anxiety and his love for her overcame his fear of Mr. Calfort. “Brothers and sisters,” he began again, “so far from indulging in luxuries I have not the necessaries of life—I have not the means to clothe my children or to give them proper food. My wife is delicate in health and I cannot afford her medical aid, and alone she must do the work of our large family. Vanities!” (growing more fearless every moment), “look at my garments—at my wife’s—and these are our best, the best we own; tattered as they are they are our best. You yourselves have sometimes spoken of the shabby manner in which my wife and children were clad—and we wear our best. Many a night have *we* gone supperless to bed that our children might have a few broken crusts that were in the house—all the food in the house; and then we have heard their cries of hunger unable to give them more.

Brothers and sisters, if your children—think—if your children were starving—imagine them going night after night half famished to their sleep. I am starving on six hundred dollars a year. We cannot live on less.”

Mr. Borne sat down overcome by his great sorrows.

“Trust in the Lord,” Deacon Lawson’s pious voice was heard to say with great solemnity.

Mr. Calfort again arose.

“We have heard Brother Borne’s remarks,” he said; “and I have but one word in reply; and that is one must cut the garment according to the cloth. And let me advise Mr. Borne to remember Brother Lawson’s remark, and put his trust in the Lord.” Mr. Calfort then resumed his seat at peace with the world and himself. Mr. Borne motioned to his weeping wife, and they left the meeting together.

Miss Amelia was also in tears, but Mrs. Barker, urged on by Mrs. Pepper, voted in favor of the reduction.

The motion was carried by five majority; and the meeting was then closed by a prayer from Mr. Lawson, and the singing of a hymn beginning, “Oh, for a closer walk with God,” which Mr. Calfort selected and raised the tune.

Miss Amelia went home heavy-hearted. She went immediately to the doctor’s office, and to him she told her grief. He listened with great indignation, and Silas who was present grew really angry at the treatment Mr. Borne had received.

This stirring consultation was not without fruits.

Early the following morning Miss Amelia and Silas, bearing a huge basket of provision and two bundles of the doctor's and Silas's half worn clothing, knocked at the kitchen door of the little brown cottage where Mr. Borne lived. Long before that door was opened Silas was walking swiftly down the street occupied with other and very important matters, leaving Miss Amelia to bear the burden of the thanks alone.

"Oh, Miss Amelia, Miss Amelia!" cried Mrs. Borne, seating herself on the floor beside the basket and taking the bundles on her lap, "how kind! how kind! The Lord has surely sent you."

"It's little enough that I have done," said the spinster wiping her eyes; "it is mostly from the doctor and Silas. But they ain't worn much any way. See!" holding up a vest, "this was the doctor's. Now that'll fit Mr. Borne, dear pastor. It's a little large, but you can easily take that in. Then he sent a whole suit."

"Why, they are new!"

"Almost."

"I am afraid they robbed themselves."

"Indeed they didn't; you have no idea of the quantities of clothes they both have. Here, Silas sent those shirts for Mr. Borne, and the coats and pantaloons to make over for the boys."

"Oh, bless that dear boy! How can I thank you all? Five shirts! and Mr. Borne's are all so worn and ragged."

“What is Mr. Borne going to do,” Miss Amelia asked at length.

“He has resigned.”

“Resigned! Oh mercy, no! What will he do? where will he go?”

“I cannot tell. The Lord only knows.”

“How is your health now?” Miss Amelia suddenly asked.

“I am no better,” despairingly.

“The doctor says—the doctor says—if you won’t mind, Mrs. Borne?”

The minister’s wife raised her eyes, “What, Miss Amelia?”

“You know,” she said, starting afresh with hopes of better success, “that doctors never charge ministers?”

“No, I didn’t.”

“Well, they don’t; and he’ll be ’round this afternoon to see you. Mind you don’t speak a word of paying him; for he said so.”

“Miss Amelia—” Mrs. Borne began.

“There! don’t say a word—I must go, I do believe he is the best man that ever was.” And with this eulogy Miss Amelia departed.

An hour later Mr. Borne returned. He had just handed in his resignation informally to Mr. Calfort, and he was heart-sick, almost to despair. But the burden was a little lightened at the sight of the well-filled dinner table of Miss Barker’s providing. The children eagerly displayed the clothing, and after an early and

hearty dinner they tried them on, and they proved more than satisfactory. The pockets were examined, as pockets are on all occasions; and to their surprise and unbounded thankfulness fifteen dollars were found distributed in them. Who could have put that money there; Dr. St. James, Miss Amelia, or Silas? No one there could tell. If Miss Amelia had been asked she might have looked conscious at the five, and Dr. St. James at the ten, but neither were there to be questioned, and neither knew of the gift of the other.

CHAPTER XVI.

“ When your beauty appears,
In its graces and airs,
As bright as an angel new dropt from the skies,
At a distance I gaze and amazed by my fears,
So strangely you dazzle my eyes.”

—THOMAS PARNELL.

A FEW minutes after five o'clock on the following Thursday afternoon Silas Thorpe and Dr. St. James knocked at the rectory door. Both had come determined to conquer; Silas had bought a new neck-tie, and Thurston had been studying Presbyterian divines.

There had been quite a discussion between the two in reference to the hour of going; Silas insisting that “spending the afternoon and taking tea,” meant going before three, while the doctor maintained the proper hour was six, perhaps later. Both yielded the hour but not their opinion, and went at five.

Paul admitted them, and his first words proved that Silas had been in the right.

“What made you so late?” he asked. “We’d given you up. I’ve been dressed ever since two, and I didn’t go to school this afternoon on purpose, and there Herbert’s been home an hour.”

He preceded them into the parlor.

"We've got a fire made here, too. Ain't it jolly? How's your thumb, Si, where you hurt it?"

"Oh, it's well." Of what account were thumbs in Christie's home!

"Sit down," Paul said, pushing the large rocking chair toward the doctor; but Thurston preferred standing for the present. As he leaned against the mantelpiece his eyes fell on the orderly rows of daguerreotypes. He idly picked one up.

"That's my aunt Phebe," Paul explained, politely taking it from him. "And that," (taking down another), "is her son Tom when he wasn't but two years old. Don't he look queer?"

"Very," absently.

"He's eight now," continued Paul, much interested; "and that old lady was father's mother. Look at her," he commanded. "Did you ever see it, Si.?"

Silas, who had seated himself on the sofa, and had his time well employed in keeping on that treacherous seat, and listening for the sound of Christie's footstep and voice, only answered, "no."

"Are the ladies at home?" St. James asked.

"Who?" said Paul, reaching for a likeness of a cross-looking baby. "That's me," he cried, pressing it upon the doctor's notice.

"Yes: I see. Is Mr. Brentwell in?"

"No, he ain't. He's gone to Luntoun to see a dying man. He had to go all of a sudden, and he said we was to tell you. Think o' me wearing dresses;"

(referring to the pictures)—“I wonder how I’d look in ’em now.”

“Be so kind as to let your mother and sisters know that we are here,” urged Thurston, strangely indifferent to the fascination of the frowning infant.

“They know it,” replied Paul, still lost in admiration of his former beauty: “I wouldn’t ’ave taken any body else in here. We always take every one right into the sitting-room, but they didn’t want to set the table before you folks. Say, do you remember when you wore dresses?”

“No,” with great dignity.

“I don’t neither,” laughed the child. “I’m awful glad we don’t have to wear ’em always, ain’t you?”

To the doctor’s relief the door opened at this moment and Horatio entered.

He greeted them warmly.

“Father was called away very unexpectedly,” he said; “but he will soon return. I’m certain my mother does not know of your arrival. Paul, go call her and the girls.”

“They can find it out like you did,” he muttered, going slowly toward the door, still holding the cross baby.

The next moment he was heard in the entry calling out “Mother, girls, mother, I say, the doctor and Silas are here. You’d better come down if you want to see them.” Then he ran back.

“Paul,” Horatio said, not very well pleased with the

performance, "go into mother's room and ask her to come here, and then go up stairs and tell the girls."

"They know it; for Lestie told me to 'hush up,'" returned Paul angrily, yet not daring to disobey.

"Well, Silas," Horatio began as the door closed after him, "how are you getting on at the Academy?"

"Tolerably," Silas replied, without looking up.

"'Tolerably,' indeed!" Thurston said, seating himself. "From what Professor Newcomb told me I am of the opinion that it is somewhat more than 'tolerably.'"

"We must ask Herbert. Ah, here he is!" (as the youth entered.) "Bertie, give us an account of Silas's 'scholarship.'"

"What'll I tell 'em Si.?" shaking hands with the doctor.

"You've nothing to tell 'em."

"Haven't I? only that he's number one in Geometry and Latin," Herbert laughed.

Horatio seated himself in front of the fire, and Thurston silently regarding him, wondered if he was really engaged, and if the whole affair was settled, and if they had any definite idea when they could be married, and if he was very happy—as he ought to be, and if he would excuse himself when evening came and go spend the evening with her. Thurston determined he would never excuse him, he would invent a thousand things to detain him.

"Mother'll be here in a moment," Paul cried, bursting in; "So'll Lestie and Christie, but Daisy's setting

the table. She was awful mad to think I hollered up the stairs that way ; and Lest said I hadn't any style. Daisy says *you're* awful stylish," to the doctor.

"Paul," said Horatio.

"Well, she did ; she said it at the dinner table, and she said the doctor had beautiful white hands too ; and Christie said she didn't like to see a man have such handsome—"

"Paul, be silent," Horatio interrupted. At that moment Mrs. Brentwell entered, to the relief of all parties, and Paul, gathering a dozen or more daguerreotypes from the mantel-piece and seating himself on the floor, gave himself up to perfect and peaceful enjoyment of them.

Silas, meanwhile, divining in what manner he would have finished his remarks if Horatio had not with such poor taste interrupted him, was much comforted ; for since Thurston's arrival, with his delicately formed white hands, his own, which were large and brown, had caused him great anxiety ; but now he was at rest, for Christie herself had expressed her opinion in favor of less elegant hands.

Of course Mrs. Brentwell, with the whole responsibility of the supper on her, had not a moment to spend in the parlor. Christie and Lestie entered as she went out, and there was a cheerful party soon seated around the fireside.

Silas, once more immersed in bliss, was seated at a respectful distance from Christie. And she was so

delighted that he had really come, that she scarcely dared to utter a word to him, lest he should prove to be a phantom that might be dispelled by human breath.

Lestie abounded in blue ribbons, which attracted the doctor's attention.

"I see that that young gentleman was true to his word," he said, "and rewarded you well for the stolen bow."

"Jim Van Pike? Of course he was: he knew better than to disappoint me. But that isn't the best of it. See my sash! Will. Lendrem gave me a piece of this. I thought I should die when he brought it"—

"Remember that 'Lest?" interrupted Paul, holding up an infantile daguerreotype of Christie and herself.

"Why, Paul, what are you looking at them now for? Put them up."

"I won't," with decision and promptness.

"You're a naughty boy."

"I ain't."

"Miss Lestie," Thurston said quickly, not caring to witness a quarrel, "I believe you have a twin sister?"

"Yes, I have," looking up.

"I have never seen her."

"Yes, you have," Lestie said.

"Behold me," said Christie, smiling.

Thurston was surprised. "And you have another?"

"An older one—Daisy. Haven't you seen her?"

"Never."

“Well, she’s seen you,” cried Paul; “didn’t I tell you what she said about your hands.

“Paul,” cried Lestie, indiscreetly and severely, “keep still.” Another painful scene threatened. A sharp retort was on Paul’s lips, when the door opened and Daisy herself entered.

Thurston did not look up until Horatio said by way of an introduction, “This is Daisy, our eldest sister Dr. St. James.”

He rose then to bow with his accustomed politeness, but paused in his surprise, staring for one instant on her face. Was it possible? Had he found her at last?

She held out her hand to greet him in true country fashion. For once words failed him. He took it silently and almost reverently. His joy at finding that she was Horatio’s sister and not his betrothed was beyond expression—if he had dared to express himself. Yet he felt inclined to embrace the youth and beg forgiveness for secret unkind thoughts, and promise to be a *brother* to him in the future.

“My father was speaking of an interesting conversation you had on the church,” Horatio said, as they seated themselves.

“Yes. We had a very interesting talk on your church, and on written prayer,” returned Dr. St. James, a little absently, remembering—as any man would have done—what Paul had said of Daisy’s opinion of his hands, and wondering if he really told the truth.

“And you are quite convinced by this time, I sup-

pose," Horatio went on, "that written prayers are the true prayers for public worship?"

"By no means convinced," the doctor said, a little more interested; "for your father brought up no Scripture arguments in their favor. He only tried to show that they are heartfelt."

"And didn't he show it plainly?" Daisy said.

"Yes, I think he did."

"And you believe now they are?"

"Now I do—yes."

"I am glad of that," she said, earnestly; for the Church and her forms were dear to Daisy's heart.

"Are you indeed?" said Thurston, really interested now because she was. "Then you must have as strong a faith in them as your father has."

"I have and I think every one has; and you have too, if you remember."

"I think that is almost impossible. But tell me why you say so. Give me your reasons; it is not often that I have the pleasure of discussing theology with ladies." He smiled.

"Oh, I'm not discussing theology; I could not do that; I am only telling what I think," she returned. "Perhaps though," she added hesitatingly, "it would be better for me not to do so."

"But I had rather you would."

"Yes, Daisy," Horatio said, "we want to hear your argument."

Silas with the younger ones had retired to another

part of the room. She looked timidly around before she spoke to make sure they were not listening.

Horatio laughed.

“They might tell father,” she explained.

“And he would have it in his sermon next Sunday.”

“Horatio, I entreat.”

“We are waiting, Miss Brentwell,” Thurston said.

“Waiting! for what?”

“Your arguments.”

“I have no arguments; it is only what I think.”

“Suppose you tell us what you think,” said Horatio.

“Every body of Christians you know,” she said to Dr. St. James, “sing hymns when they are worshipping God. Don’t they?”

“Yes. Am I to agree to every step?”

“Yes; or I cannot go on. Well,” (in true womanly fashion) “some of those hymns are hymns of praise, and some are prayers. Are they not?”

“Yes. Step two.”

“I agree too,” said Horatio.

“Such a hymn, (you remember it,) as ‘Jesus, Saviour of my soul, let me to Thy bosom fly,’ is a prayer; and you have it in your collection, haven’t you?”

“Yes, we have. Step three.”

“Oh, that is not a step. But when we sing that hymn we sing it from our hearts and are praying those words—every Christian is. So you are praying a written prayer when you sing. Now, don’t you?”

“I had not thought of that before. I shall be care-

ful how I sing in the future," he said smiling. "But what more, Miss Brentwell?"

She hesitated.

"Yes, Daisy, we are waiting for more."

"These are no proofs, you know," she said, as though she would apologize.

"We know it," said the doctor; "they are only interesting facts." He was well pleased with what she had said, but at the same time he was half-laughing at her.

"And I was only going to add that when mothers teach their young children to pray they always teach them written prayers first; such as 'Now I lay me down to sleep,' and the 'Lord's prayer.' All mothers, whether they are Church-women or not, do this. Isn't that true?"

"As far as I know, it is. My good Presbyterian mother taught me and my brothers both of those prayers as soon as we could talk."

"Well, isn't it very inconsistent?" Daisy urged, archly.

"You see, doctor," said Horatio, "you can get around a man's argument, but never a woman's; they pin you on the spot."

"They are no arguments," said Daisy.

"Only facts," said the doctor again.

The front door closing heavily announced Mr. Brentwell's return.

"There's father," cried Paul, starting up and let-

ting the pictures fall on the floor. "I'll tell him you've come."

But he was anticipated by the clergyman's entering. And simultaneously they were summoned to tea by the rickety ringing of an old door bell, which had been fitted up by Herbert for the occasion.

And that tea! Can words describe it? How faded the sitting-room looked to Daisy when the stylish physician entered! How common and poor the table was, set with the best dishes—so many of them were cracked. She had never realized before that the best tablecloth was so darned and mended, and she had always until that moment considered the china sugar bowl a model of beauty, and had even been proud of it—but now! what could have looked more shabby? How could her mother have been so careless as to have given the doctor the broken chair? She heard it creak as he sat down. Suppose it should give way and he should fall? She covertly watched every move he made to be sure he did not make too many.

How she regretted that Lou, the cat, had been encouraged since kittenhood to take her place at the table—though that place was the floor,—and make known her wants if not attended to immediately! And how she wished she had instructed Paul some time a long while ago never to feed her, and had impressed the instructions on his mind! How poor their home-made napkin-rings must look to him! and it was reported down at the store that he had such an elegant one.

How she did wish that theirs were silver ! And then Daisy, looking at her father, saw his worn coat, and remembered that it was his best and that he was in great need of another one, and made up her mind that if Dr. St. James did think less of them for these signs of poverty he was no Christian ; and she was half inclined to hate him. But her charitable heart rebelled against such unkindness ; and to drive away these warping, discontented thoughts, which were strange and new in her heart, she looked around the cheerful table, and saw father, mother, brothers and sisters in one unbroken band ; and her heart went up in a prayer of thankfulness as she heard their happy voices—but there was the cat ! She *would* cry, and Paul *would* give her broken bits, and Herbert, trying to make him desist, would make faces and mute signs to him over the table, which the doctor certainly saw ; and Paul, not understanding them, would ask out loud what he wanted. And oh !—worse than all else, when Christie, who sat next to Paul, gave him a quiet touch with her foot as a hint that he should remain silent, he called out at the top of his voice that she was kicking him.

It would have been a relief to Daisy, if she had known that Thurston in noticing the napkin-rings, thought them beautiful, and decided that she must have made them—as she did—because they were so pretty, and that he would have preferred one of them to ten like his own. And it would have been something of a relief, too, if she had known that so far from seeing

Herbert's faces and signs he saw only *her* face ; and instead of looking contemptuously on the cat he did not see her at all or Paul's generosity toward her, or that it would not have mattered so much if he had ; for he was so rapidly falling in love with her that forty cats could not have distracted his attention—no, not if one sat on either of her shoulders and the rest were distributed on and under the table ;—and cats he always hated.

The doctor remembered as he sat at the table that Paul had said Daisy laid it, and he admired it accordingly, which also might have afforded her some relief if she had known it. And when Mrs. Brentwell accidentally remarked, “ I'm afraid, Daisy, that you didn't make the tea strong enough for the doctor,” he hastened to say “ that it was the best he had ever tasted,” and believed his own statement. That was a relief to Daisy from all her cares.

“ Dr. St. James,” Paul cried, in the first pause in the conversation ; “ you don't know what Mr. Green says about you.”

“ No : but I think I should like to hear,” Thurston returned, smiling. “ I am very much interested in that gentleman.”

“ Well,” Paul said grandly, “ I just stepped into his store this morning to buy a quarter of a pound of tea and a half a pound of cheese and some sugar—how much sugar did I get, mother ? ”

“ It is of no account, my dear,” returned the anxious mother, while the sisters trembled.

"I got some sugar anyway : and Mr. Green wanted to know if we were going to have company—'cause I bought so much. Oh, I guess it was because I bought that half a pound o' cheese, mother."

"Yes, dear," very anxiously.

"I told him, yes we were : that you and Silas were coming ; and what do you think he said ?"

"That is what we are waiting to hear," Daisy said.

"The store was pretty full, and I said you were coming right out loud so 's't they'd hear : I wa'n't ashamed. Mr. Green he called me to one side, and whispered that we must watch you."

"Do what ?" cried Mr. Brentwell.

"Watch him," repeated Paul with dignity. "He says he's mysterious. He wanted to know what else we were going to have for tea and which of the girls the doctor comes to see."

Thurston related the short conversation he had with the grocer at Mrs. Morris's.

"He will never forgive you," said Horatio, as they left the table. Paul, feeling himself to be the lion of the assembly, continued his entertainment by introducing the doctor to the cat, and was following the gentlemen and Mrs. Brentwell from the room, when Herbert and the girls, who remained in the sitting-room, called him back. The next fifteen minutes the three sisters and Herbert spent in entreaties, threatenings and offerings of large rewards if he would refrain from telling family affairs with such painful plainness.

He was incorrigible. Herbert's ball, Christie's knife, Lestie's bow and arrow—long coveted, and Daisy's book of Fairy tales were offered, without making the least impression upon him.

“You ought n't to do things you don't want people to know,” he said laconically as he left the room.

Daisy followed him into the parlor. Thurston arose and gave her his chair, seating himself beside her. Horatio and Silas were seated near: Mr. and Mrs. Brentwell were entertaining callers.

“I have been looking over one of Scott's novels,” the doctor said to Daisy, laying his hand on the one he had been reading.

“Kenilworth!” she said. “It would be my favorite if it were not for the sad ending. I did not want Amy Robsart killed in that manner, and it is sadder still to know that it is really true.”

“I read not long ago,” returned Thurston, “that Scott does not give a true account of her death. She died naturally. It divests the tale of some of its romance, however, and you may not enjoy it as well.”

“I shall enjoy it more, and I am glad you told me.”

They talked of all the dull books on the table, and of more recent publications; and Thurston finding that she had never read Longfellow's “Evangeline” offered to loan it to her, and she accepted it with all her native sweetness and grace. He had loaned many a book to many a fair maiden, but never did it give him half the happiness that this did.

"We must tell Dr. St. James and Daisy," Horatio said turning to them.

"Say yes first, doctor," said Lestie.

"Yes ; I am willing for you to tell us."

"No," cried Christie ; "say you will do as we want you to."

"When I know, I doubtless shall."

"Well," said Lestie, "Horatio will be twenty-one on the twentieth of next July."

"And we are going to celebrate it," added Silas, "as it should be—"

"Silas's father has an island just one mile long—" began Horatio.

"With a house on it," interrupted Herbert.

"Where is the island ? and what has it to do with Mr. Brentwell's birthday ?"

"The island," said Silas, "is in the river that runs by here, just a mile and a half from my father's house." Taking a book from the table he continued, "Here," indicating the south-west corner, "is father's house. Here is the river and up here the island, and right in the centre of the island is a four-roomed house in which no one lives ; and there we propose to spend a week or more in honor of Horatio's coming of age. We are to have but a small party, and shall go on the nineteenth of July, with Mr. Brentwell's consent."

"He'll be willing," said Herbert.

"Miss Lestie has promised for Miss Brentwell," Silas went on ; "Now, doctor, will you accompany us ?"

"I will, thank you, if I can make it possible, and I think I can."

"Then it's settled," said Lestie.

"The house has some furniture in it," said Christie, resuming the description.

"And we will have fresh supplies of provision from the farm every day," added Silas.

"Besides the fish we catch," said Horatio.

The callers had departed, and Mr. Brentwell approached the group. He was soon informed of the project, and gave his ready consent to it. When it was more fully discussed and entirely approved of by every one the clergyman said,

"Doctor, would you like a half-hour's conversation on last week's topic?"

"I should, indeed."

"And we will go into the sitting-room," said Christie, "that we may not disturb them, and they shall join us there."

"We will be with you directly," Thurston said, as they went out.

When the doctor and Silas departed at a late hour that evening, the former promised to call in a few days to examine into Daisy's illness and prescribe for her. Never until the moment did he realize what a happy choice he made when he chose the medical profession. And Daisy did not dread the examination in the least.

CHAPTER XVII.

“For I would have you know, that here in the country, there is not the least thing can be said or done but people will talk and find fault: indeed the parson must be essentially good who could bring his whole parish to give him a good word.”

—DON QUIXOTE.

THE family at the rectory were early astir the next morning. Friday was Mrs. Brentwell's weekly cleaning-day. On this day every room was entered, every particle of dust and dirt removed with such rigor, that it was some time before they gained courage to intrude again. Mr. Brentwell had enjoyed this scouring season, for it afforded him a few hours of quiet study in the sitting-room. But now that was over; Mrs. Brentwell and the girls had completed their work by a thorough cleaning of that room, and the clergyman in consequence had departed. An hour later Mrs. Brentwell and Christie were employed in the manufacture of some mince-pies. Daisy and Lestie were sewing, and the boys were—who knows where boys ever are? Horatio lay upon the lounge. He had been reading the sole medical work that he owned: a pamphlet of some seventy-five pages—an interesting work on the diseases which the human liver is heir to. The book had been sent to Dr. Doreann; but considering the treatment it advised altogether too modern for his practice, he had a short time before his death given it

to Horatio, who had studied it at the time, and since the old doctor's decease it had been his daily text book—a poor substitute for the library and tutor. Every day he seemed to feel his loss more painfully but he never omitted the perusal of the pamphlet, though he grew to almost hate the sight of its yellow cover and black lettering.

This morning he could not or would not study it. He threw it from him and buried his face in the pillow, feeling that he would never read another word in it.

“What has happened?” Lestie asked. It had fallen at her feet, and she stooped to pick it up.

“Are you tired of your book?” queried Daisy, turning her chair to face him.

“Yes,” returned Horatio, ungraciously.

“Aren't you going to study it any more?” said Lestie, carefully smoothing out the curled corners.

“No ; never again,” said Horatio in a determined but smothered voice.

“Why?” persisted Lestie. Her brother made no reply, and she went on, “Aren't you going to be a doctor after all?”

This aroused Horatio. He sat up. “How can you ask me such a question?” he cried. “Of course I'm not going to ; and for the simple reason that I can't. No other one. Not because my whole soul and heart are not wrapt up in it ; for they are. It has been my life-long desire to be a physician, and now I must give it up—and you know it. Why do you talk to me so?”

“Don’t give it up, Horatio,” said Daisy, sighing, “Why do you?”

“Why do I! why do you ask me, you’d better say. How can I go on with neither books nor instructor? When Dr. Doreann died I gave it up; and here I’ve been dilly-dallying round the house ever since, just doing nothing—and not one thing in the village that I can do.”

“Why, you’ve got this book to study,” said Lestie, turning over the pages.

“*That* book,” retorted Horatio, contemptuously. “I’ll burn it before I’ll read it again. What good will it ever do me I’d like to know? What is one poor, paltry book? It’s just nothing.”

“I thought you considered it valuable,” said Daisy, gently.

“So I do: but of what use is *one* book—just one? and that a pamphlet.”

“Do you know all that is in it?” Lestie asked; “for you might read it over until you do.”

“Know it!” cried Horatio. “I could repeat every word of it—backwards or any way. I could set up a Liver Hospital if that book contained all the necessary knowledge. Know it! why Lestie I could say off any page that you might number. The thing runs in my head the whole time; I can’t drive it away. I only wish I could forget it.”

“Is there no way—” began Daisy.

“There is only one way for everything,” interrupted

Horatio, beginning to pace the floor; "and that is money. It's money, money, money. 'Every door is barred with gold and opens but to golden keys,'—keys which *I* shall never possess; consequently I shall never possess anything. It's money the world over. If I had money I could buy the books I need, and enter some medical college. Doubtless," he added, bitterly, "Dr. St. James would be able to recommend a good one."

"Father says he has a splendid library," observed Lestie.

"There's money again," cried Horatio, pausing in his walk, and throwing out one hand as if it contained the said money. "There's money! what could he do if he hadn't it?"

"Yes," added Lestie, "the Van Pikes say that he is very, very wealthy."

Horatio thrust his hands in his pockets and walked on. "I wonder," he said, with a short laugh, "what he'd say to *my* library. He might want to borrow it if he knew of its value."

"Don't talk that way," said Daisy, sadly.

"If I had five dollars," continued the youth, changing his tone,— "here's a work I might buy, which I could study by myself for a long time. The doctor had it: he bought it a short time before he died." He stopped by the window and looked out for a moment.

"But instead of having five dollars," he went on, "I haven't five cents, or a respectable coat to my back."

Daisy and Lestie were in tears.

“Don’t cry,” he said, impatiently turning away from them that they might not see that he did not always practice what he preached : “it’ll come all right in the end, I suppose, though it does look discouraging just now.”

“Oh yes, it will indeed,” sobbed Daisy.

“There’s Mrs. Wade coming in,” Horatio announced in a displeased tone. “I wonder what is new now. Lestie, please go to the door. I’m going up to my room to get rid of seeing her.”

“No, Horatio,” said Daisy, wiping her eyes, “don’t go up stairs ; you will catch cold in your room, besides growing very despondent all alone.”

“I don’t want to hear her gossip.”

“But she may not gossip to-day.”

“That is simply impossible. I must go, Daisy. Don’t detain me. Go to the door, Lestie. Why don’t you ?”

“I won’t, if you don’t stay,” returned Lestie. Horatio picked the despised pamphlet from the floor, where Lestie had dropped it, and hastily left the room.

Lestie determinedly kept her seat, and Christie coming from the kitchen, answered the summons.

Mrs. Wade entered the sitting-room with the usual sweet and captivating smile playing around her immense mouth and lips. She looked very wise as she seated herself by the window to maintain a watch of the street—so wise that Daisy anticipated some wonderful revelation ; of the kind that is generally preceded by

looks of amazing wisdom, and, at times, of dark mystery. She had been walking rapidly, and being a large person was somewhat out of breath.

“Is your marm in?” she panted. Christie hastened to summon Mrs. Brentwell, and calling out Lestie the two proceeded alone in the manufacture of the pies. It was with great reluctance that Lestie complied with the request; her itching ears were impatient to hear what Mother Wade would disclose—for she always brought some new facts to light—and it was at her instigation that the door connecting the sitting-room and kitchen should be left ajar, that nothing might be lost.

But it was not to impart information that the old lady called this morning; it was to gain a little for herself—to obtain a slight foundation upon which to rear a mighty superstructure.

“Good morning, Mis’ Brentwell,” she said, as that lady entered. “Busy as ever, I see. You put idle people to blush, I must say. Not that I’m idle, or that I’m a blushing. No, there ain’t a smarter worker in the town o’ Newfield than I be, an’ so I’ve brung up my Jane. She’s just like me. I was saying to her this morning, ‘Jane,’ says I, ‘you’re takin’ after your old marm in bein’ a good worker.’ ‘Marm,’ she says, says she, ‘I alwa’s wanted to.’ It’s been her hull aim, an’ now she can’t be beat.”

“Is your youngest daughter at home now?” Mrs. Brentwell asked.

“Wal yes, kind o’,” returned Mrs. Wade, doubtfully.

"You couldn't call her to hum neither. I was sayin' to her this morning, 'Jane,' I says, says I, 'if any body was to ask me if you was to hum now-a-days, I couldn't have no idee what to tell 'em,' says I. 'Marm,' says she, 'you wouldn't now, would you?' You see, she's sewin' at Mis' Van Pike's durin' the day, and sleepin' at home some nights, and some nights stayin' there. Now she didn't come last night, and I hain't seen her since yesterday morning. It's better'n havin' her away off and never knowin' how she's gettin' on. But them Van Pikes is dreadful worldly people. I 'most dread to have my Jane keep company with 'em. Laurey she's havin' a blue silk made to ketch the new doctor in. Jane says she axes her par questions about him the hull time, and he's been up there to spend the evening twice. I heerd that he was here last night."

Mrs. Brentwell replied that he had been there the previous evening.

"And Silas Thorpe too. Sakes alive! But you had quite a party."

"Oh, no," laughed Daisy.

"But I heerd you had," persisted the old woman; "a party and dancin'."

"Oh, the idea!" cried Lestie, putting her head in at the door, "who said that?"

"Wal, about every body's sayin' it now."

"Every one in the village says that we had a party last night!" repeated Daisy. "Who could have originated it?"

“It don’t take long for things to originate in New-field,” said Lestie, entering the sitting-room with an unbaked pie in her hand; “it’s the most *original* town in the universe.”

“It ain’t the party, you know,” continued Mrs. Wade, “but the dancin’. Folks don’t like the idee of dancin’ goin’ on in a minister’s house.”

“I only wish we knew how,” cried Lestie, “and *I’d* give ’em dancing in a minister’s house.”

“La now, Lestie,” said Mrs. Wade, “your ’pa wouldn’t let you. There’s my Jane, she never ’sperienced religion, but she says to me this morning, she says, ‘Marm, I never could dance like them Van Pikes do,’ she says. ‘It nigh breaks my heart to see Laurey do it,’ an’ my Jane ain’t no professor. I jes’ feel as if I’d missed my calling when I wasn’t a man. I’d been a parson sure.”

“What makes you say that my father wouldn’t allow me to dance,” cried Lestie impatiently, “when you said before that we had danced last night?”

Mother Wade answered not. Lestie’s logic was beyond her depth, but she mentally recorded the girl’s impudence to repeat it at the next call.

“Lestie,” Mrs. Brentwell said quietly, “I think the pies in the oven need attention.”

Lestie flounced out of the room.

“Yes,” continued Mrs. Wade, “I ought for certain to ’ave been a parson. I could have writ the handsomest sermons that ever saw paper. My poor man he used to

say to me, he did, 'Mother,' he'd say, 'you've got a power o' tongue, you'd give a sinner the longest kind o' settin' down, longer'n any parson.' An' I know it. I was sayin' to my Jane this morning, 'Jane,' I says, 'when they has dancin' at the minister's, it works me.'

" 'Marm,' says she, 'it does me.' An' my Jane ain't no professor. She'd been tuk into the Baptists long ago, but she don't like Mr. Borne's prayers; she thinks there ain't no religion in 'em. She was a sayin' to me this morning, 'Marm,' says she, 'I can't go Mr. Borne's prayers noways. I can't for sure, marm,' she says. 'Jane,' I says, 'join the 'Piscopals—like your marm has.'

" 'Marm,' says she, 'I can't; that white gownd of Mr. Brentwell's keeps me from havin' religion when I go to St. Paul's.' You see my Jane she's makin' dresses all the week, and when Sunday comes around she don't want to see the parson's white dress, and be reminded of her sewin'. She wants to rest her thinkin' too.

" 'Marm,' she says, says she, 'I keep thinkin' about how much stuff it took, and how the skirt sets, an' all them things.' I've talked and talked to her, but I can't make no 'Piscopal out of her."

"I don't think that I have seen you at service in some time, Mrs. Wade," said Mrs. Brentwell; "perhaps your daughter would come if you did."

"Wal now, Mis' Brentwell, since you spoke, I'll jes' tell you how it is. I'm a poor hard workin' woman, as you well know. It's up I get Monday morning, and

work hard until Saturday night, only stoppin' a bit sometimes to run into a neighbor's for a minute's chat ; so by the time Sunday comes I'm clean worn out, and I serve the Lord at home restin'. Sunday was made to rest in."

"Sunday is a day of rest," returned Mrs. Brentwell, gravely, "a day of rest for our tired bodies, therefore we cease to work ; but that is not all, Mrs. Wade ; it is not our bodies alone that are tired from the week's labor, but our souls are weary from the encounter with the world, and need rest and strengthening infinitely more than our bodies do. And where can they be strengthened but with God ? and where can we seek God but in His sanctuary ?"

"An' so I say, mum, I was tellin' Jane this morning that Sunday was given us to rest in and to serve the Lord. 'Jane,' says I, 'never forget that.' 'Marm,' she says, says she, 'I won't.' An' my Jane ain't no professor."

"But we cannot serve the Lord at home when it is possible to attend service, and mingle with His saints in His worship. He will not accept the lazy, indifferent praise that would be given Him in our private houses, sitting around in an idle manner. Although the hands are idle the Lord's day is not kept holy ; the heart, which He demands, remains with the world. Our thoughts, which should be all His, are with the week's labor."

"That's jest what I've said to Jane time and again,

Mis' Brentwell. 'Jane,' I've said, 'be sure and read your Bible on Sundays, an' remember and keep the Sabbath day holy like your marm alwa's taught you to.' 'Marm,' says she, 'I will. I alwa's read the Bible on Sundays, an' think on pious things.'"

"Surrounded as you are by all the week-day associations, I should think it impossible for you to keep your thoughts on God alone."

"Oh no, mum ; it's easy as eatin'."

"But, Mrs. Wade, if you love your Saviour enough to sit one whole day reading His word and meditating upon Him, you certainly love Him enough to obey His commands, and not to forsake the assembling."

"That's so, Mis' Brentwell, that's jes' so, but when a body needs rest, you know, they likes to lay round, an' not be dressed an' trottin' out."

"There is another way in which to look at it, in a more worldly point of view. You do not rest at home even as you do in church. At home you are constantly reminded of your toil ; you go over the same beaten track that you went over on the week day, and you arise unrefreshed on Monday morning for the old round of duties. Your heart has not been cheered on Sunday by blessed communion with the Saints, nor are your thoughts one moment taken from your tasks."

"Jes' so, jes' so," assented Mrs. Wade, nodding her head energetically.

"While if you had attended the services of God, your mind would have been upon Him, and your

thoughts filled by Him during the whole day. You would have gone out of the old beaten way and rested in His bosom, and been refreshed and strengthened for another week's toil. For our own selfish sake, if there were no other consideration, it is better to attend church."

"Jes' so, an' if it wasn't for Ike's bein' away from home all the week an' comin' home Sundays, nobody could never say I was away from service. You see when one o' your boys is away up to Fairhope the hull week, an' jes' comes to see his marm on Sundays, why I take it that it is my duty to stay with him and see to him."

"But Mrs. Wade, is not that putting your son before God?"

"Wal, no; not that I see. It's a mother's place to be takin' care o' her children and see to their comfort."

"There's no commandment to that effect in the Bible, while there is one that we shall keep the Lord's day holy. And we are commanded *not* to forsake the assembling of ourselves together."

"Jes' so."

"We have not the time to spend away from the Lord's house," Mrs. Brentwell continued earnestly, trying to make some impression on the old woman's heart. "The life we now live is but a fragment of our being, compared with the eternity that we shall enter upon hereafter. It is like a grain of dust compared with the whole earth—like a drop of rain to the showers that fall."

“Jes’ so, Mis’ Brentwell, I was tellin’ that to Jane this morning.”

“That eternity will yet be new when we have spent ages in it ; when thousands of years have rolled on, and, looking back, our life will be but the faintest speck ; and on that speck, as it were, all depends. Do you not think, Mrs. Wade, that then we will remember the Sundays upon earth, and will have cause either to rejoice that we spent them as God has commanded, or to bitterly bewail that in our blind sinfulness we wasted them ?”

“Jes’ so.”

“I hope to see you at service next Sunday with your son and daughter,” Mrs. Brentwell said, smilingly.

“Wal, now, that’s more’n I can promise.”

“Would you like Sunday to be abolished, Mrs. Wade ?”

“Ma’am ?”

“Would you be better pleased if there were no Sunday ?”

“Wal, I reckon not,” said Mrs. Wade, laughing until she shook her fat sides. “No Sunday ! Ike a stayin’ away all the time to Fairhope !”

“Would you be willing, then, for all the churches to be shut up on that day ; willing for them to never have any service in them ?”

“No, I wouldn’t, Mis’ Brentwell. Be I a heathen ?” staring in surprise.

“You approve of church services and wish them to be kept up, but depend upon others to do it. If every

one remained away you must know that there could be no service."

"I'm only one o' the crowd."

"But the crowd is made up of individuals. Your presence is as much as that of any one other person. If you do truly desire that St. Paul's Church shall be opened every Sunday for divine services, you will attend, and do your part toward maintaining them."

"I hain't no idee that my stayin' away will shut the church up, or my goin' will keep it agoin'."

"But if all absent themselves, the church must be closed ; and that 'all' is made up of single individuals."

"Jes' so."

"And," continued Mrs. Brentwell, "your presence there will influence others to come ; every one has influence with a certain number."

"Jes' so, jes' so. I was tellin' Jane this morning that very thing. 'Jane,' I says, 'when them Van Pikes is dancin' don't you be lookin' on ; it's only encouragin' them.' 'Marm,' she says, 'I won't.' You see, if I'd 'ave been a parson, I'd 'ave preached agin dancin' the hull o' my life. Now, wouldn't you, Mis' Brentwell ?"

"I don't think that I should," replied Mrs. Brentwell, slowly rocking her chair ; "there are too *many evils* in the world to be preached against. We need not attack a harmless pleasure. If we would think less of our neighbor's feet, and guard our own tongues more closely, there would be much less sin done. It is the

the *tongue* that is a fire, and the tongue it is that cannot be tamed."

"Jes' so ; but that ain't as wicked, to my thinking, as dancin'. I've alwa's warned my Jane agin it. A little chat with a neighbor don't do no harm, but dancin' is the beginning of all evil."

"It is against these 'chats' that we read so much in the Bible, while there is nothing against dancing. Indeed, Mrs. Wade, the tongue does a thousand times more harm than the feet."

"Jes' so," agreed Mrs. Wade. "It's about time for me to be goin'. I got so interested with arguing with you that I 'most forgot what I came for. I was a workin' up to Miss Nettie's all day yesterday. Poor Miss Nettie, she's a failin' fast. To my mind she ain't long for this earth, an' I was tellin' her so. 'Miss Nettie,' says I, 'it's time you was thinking o' your latter end.' She didn't say nothin', she only looked at me queer. 'There's nothing like being prepared,' says I. When I was coming away, she said she wanted to see Horatio, an' she'd be obliged if I'd send one o' the boys up to tell him ; but I thought I'd come myself, seein' I hadn't heerd how Daisy is, an' to tell you what folks are sayin' about your dancin'."

"When is Horatio to go ?" Daisy asked.

"'Most any time to-day'll do. She wasn't particular. Now I'll be goin'."

"Come again soon, Mrs. Wade," Mrs. Brentwell said, as they arose, "and we will talk more of church-going."

"I'll drop in most any time, thank you. I want to see Mr. Brentwell anyhow. Good morning, folks."

"Good morning;" and the door shut after Mother Wade.

Christie and Lestie returned to the sitting-room, and announced that the pies were done.

"The table must be set immediately," said Mrs. Brentwell; "your father will soon be coming home."

"It is after twelve," added Daisy; "and there are the boys now."

"Didn't Mrs. Wade say that Miss Nettie wants to see Horatio?" Lestie asked.

"Yes," said Daisy, springing up; "and I must tell him. Poor boy! he has been up in the cold all this while."

She found him in his room, lying upon the bed with his face buried in the pillow.

She laid her hand on his shoulder.

"Horatio, are you asleep?"

"No," was the muffled reply.

"Come down stairs now; Mrs. Wade has gone, and dinner will be ready soon."

"I don't want any dinner."

"But you must eat. Mrs. Wade came for you after all," she added.

"What did she want with me? I'm glad you didn't call me."

"It wasn't worth while. It is only that Miss Nettie sent for you to go see her."

"Miss Nettie Doreann?" cried Horatio, raising his face from the pillow for the first time.

"You are to go this afternoon."

"I ought to have gone before. What does she want to see me about?" sitting up.

"I can't tell. Will you go?"

"I can't get out of it," he returned, as they left the room together. It would have taken a great deal of persuasion to have kept him from complying with the old lady's request, however.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"My prayer hath power with God."

—CHARLES WESLEY.

THERE was nothing strange in Miss Nettie's sending for Horatio ; she had frequently sent for Mrs. Brentwell and the young ladies since her brother's death, and had several times expressed a desire to see Horatio ; for he was a great favorite with her. But he had delayed going with a youth's natural dislike to paying visits.

"If she calls me to account for my past neglect, I sha'n't have a word to say in self-defence," he said, as he prepared to go. "I sha'n't stay five minutes," he added.

"You should have gone before," Mrs. Brentwell said, brushing his coat vigorously.

"Give her my love," Lestie said, as he left the room, "and tell her I'll take those satin gowns, when she is through with them."

He found Miss Nettie seated alone in the little dull parlor, idly watching the passers-by. She greeted him almost joyfully.

"Dear boy," she said, taking both his hands in hers, "I'm so glad you've come to see old Miss Nettie at last."

“Miss Nettie,” he said, as he seated himself beside her, “it is a shame I have not come before, and there is no excuse for my neglect.”

She retained one of his warm hands in her own withered one. “You have not been here since—” she began ; then after a moment’s hesitation went on, “not since David went away.”

“But I will come, Miss Nettie,” he said impulsively ; “I will come often now.”

“I sent for you to-day,” she went on quietly, “to tell you a few last things. I shall not be here long, Horatio.”

“Oh, Miss Nettie, don’t, don’t say that.”

“Why should I wish to linger here ? there are no ties for me on earth, and I am a lone, old woman.” There was a pause, then she asked quickly, “What are you doing ?”

“What am I doing ?” he repeated.

“Are you studying ?”

“No ma’am,” he said simply.

“Are you employed during the day ?”

“No, Miss Nettie, I am not. I am doing nothing but sitting around the house,” he said, with ill-concealed bitterness.

“And it troubles you ?”

“Indeed, it does.”

“I know it, child, I know it. Have you no books ?”

“Not one.”

“Poor boy,” Miss Nettie said tenderly. “I have been very thoughtless ; I have been so taken up with

my own sorrow that I have forgotten every one. There are those books of David's lying unused, while you have needed them so much. Why didn't you remind me?"

"How could I, Miss Nettie? I did not dare for fear of paining you."

"At first it would have pained me, but now it pains me to see them neglected," she returned, clasping his hand more closely. "They are yours, dear Horatio, your own. There! child, don't thank me; for I'm going to demand payment." She smiled, as she waved one hand to enforce his silence; "and that payment may be beyond you. I want you to study here in the old office, and keep me a little company in these lonely days. I shall not disturb you often, dear; only sometimes I will put my head in to see if you are there: as I did when David sat with you. There, don't thank me!"

"Thank you! thank you! I will, I must, Miss Nettie, I must thank you: you are so kind. And the greatest kindness of all is your allowing me to study here in the office. Oh, Miss Nettie, you don't know how troubled I have been about my studies. I feared I never could go on with them, having no tutor, no books and no money; and the doctor is so different from your brother. He is kind but then he is *not* Dr. Doreann."

"He is a kind, good man, Horatio," she said, sighing; "and the village folks take wonderfully to him."

"Has he been to see you?"

"He drops in for a moment almost every day."

“He does ? and *I* have been so neglectful, when you are so kind.”

“There, there, don’t talk of it, child : you will come often now—you will be here every day, too.”

“I shall come early, and stay late. And you will bring your work or book, and sit in the office with me.”

“I’m afraid I should be a great bother,” she said, smiling again.

“Indeed, you would not. Think of the crowd that would be in the room if I were to study at home, and every one talking at the same time. Oh, Miss Nettie !” he cried suddenly, “how can I thank you for your kindness ? How can I ever repay you ?”

“You repay me well,” she answered, “by being with me. I’ve been so alone, Horatio, and your presence will be a comfort to me. The books are of no use to me, you know.”

“And,” he went on eagerly, “I shall not only keep you from being lonely, but I will do all your errands ; I will bring coal and water, and cut wood, and make your fires.”

“Dear, dear boy ! I cannot think of having your studies interrupted in that manner.”

“It will not be an interruption but a recreation. I shall do it, Miss Nettie, any way.”

“We’ll see.”

“Of course we will,” he returned gleefully. “And now,” he added, rising, “I must go. Mother and the girls will be so happy when they hear of your kindness,

that I am impatient to tell them. Daisy has worried about it as much as I have, but Christie has had strong faith that God would bring it so that I might resume my studies—just as He has done.”

“One moment, dear.” Miss Nettie drew a large wallet from her pocket. “Sit down again. There is something here that may be necessary some day. You see,” she said, taking a paper from it, and spreading it out on her lap, while Horatio resumed his seat; “you see, if I should die suddenly, and the books were here, you could not claim them. So Mr. Calfort drew this up for me, and I signed it. Read it.”

Horatio did so. It was merely a formal bestowal on him of all the medical works once owned by Dr. Doreann.

“This is very kind and very thoughtful of you,” he said. “It would never have occurred to me that such a thing was necessary.”

“It may not be; but it is best for you to have it; then there can be no trouble.”

He folded it up, and put it in one of his vest pockets. “Good bye, he said, kissing her forehead respectfully, almost reverently.

“Good bye, Miss Nettie, I thank you again for your kindness. I shall be here early to-morrow. Please save your errands.”

Miss Nettie, seeing that he really desired it, said that she would; and Horatio departed. He had a lighter heart than he had had for many weeks as he walked quickly down the street, whistling to himself. When he

came within sight of the rectory, he resumed his former heart-broken expression to hide his good news until he saw fit for his tongue to communicate it—not his face. He slammed the front door after him in the same impatient manner that had been his of late. The boys had returned from school, and were seated on the floor by the fire, causing great quantities of gingerbread and apples to disappear with fearful rapidity. Mrs. Brentwell was sewing, Lestie was sitting idle, and Christie was reading, seated by the window.

“Well,” cried Lestie, the moment Horatio entered the sitting-room door, “what did she want?”

He threw himself on the lounge, after the manner of one whose last earthly comfort has fled, and now only waits to flee himself—even into the arms of death.

“What did she want?” repeated Lestie, impatiently, as he did not reply; “can’t you tell us?”

“She wanted to see me; and she saw me.”

Mrs. Brentwell looked up, and Christie stopped reading.

“What for?” persisted Lestie.

“Do tell her,” cried Paul, speaking one word for his sister, and two for himself; “she’ll tease you till you do.”

“If you go out of the room, may be I will,” returned Horatio, who understood Paul.

“Why can’t I hear?”

“I didn’t know that you would care to.”

“You might tell her,” muttered Paul.

“Oh, I don’t want to hear!” said Lestie.

“Then I’ll tell you. I gave her your love, and told her what you said about the satin dresses, and she said that she was done with all except one—a yellow one, which she is to wear to a party in Fairhope next week; you are welcome to the others at any time.”

“Oh, Horatio!” cried Christie, while Lestie deigned no reply.

“Are you going after ’em Lest?” asked Paul, eagerly, not doubting one syllable. At that moment, Daisy, who had been in the parlor secretly reviewing “Kenilworth,” entered.

“What is the matter?” she asked, seeing Lestie’s pouting lips.

“What is the matter!” cried Horatio; “why Miss Nettie has sent Lestie the dresses she wanted, and now she don’t like it.”

“That can’t be true; you are teasing her.”

“You can read for yourself,” returned Horatio, taking the paper that Miss Nettie had given him from his pocket, and giving it to Daisy; “here is her letter about it.”

Lestie sprang up and looked over Daisy’s shoulder, believing him for the moment.

“Oh, Horatio, I’m so glad!” cried Daisy, when she had read it.

“I can’t make anything out of it,” said Lestie, taking the paper in her own hands.

“Dear brother, how happy you must be,” Daisy said, throwing her arms around his neck.

“What is it?” Mrs. Brentwell and Christie asked.

“How queer you are, Horatio!” Herbert observed.

Paul, with his usual ceremony, snatched the paper from Lestie.

“Give that back,” she cried, springing for it.

“If you tear that, woe be unto you,” said Horatio, rescuing it with difficulty. “Now if you all listen, I’ll read it to you.” The audience was calmed in an instant, and he proceeded to give a most joyful reading.

Mrs. Brentwell wiped tears from her eyes; Christie’s heart went up in a prayer of thanksgiving. Lestie was the first to speak.

“There ain’t a word about dresses in there.”

“Of course not,” returned Horatio.

“You tell awful stories.”

“Lestie, is that the way in which you rejoice with your brother?” said Mrs. Brentwell.

“I couldn’t be so selfish, Lestie,” said Daisy, reading the precious paper over again.

“I’m not selfish, but he teases me,” said Lestie, with tears in her eyes. “I’m as glad as any of you.”

“Of course you are, little girl,” said Horatio, kissing her. “I didn’t mean to tease you, but I was so happy that I had to do something to let off steam, and give vent to my feelings.”

“A poor way, son, to place stumbling-blocks in the way of others.”

“I know it, mother; I’ll be better after this,” he said, dragging Lestie by her waist to Christie’s window.

“Christie, he said gravely, “I’m going to thank you for all this.”

“Why me?” she asked, looking up with a bright smile, as he laid his hand on her head.

“You, dear sister, for your prayers of faith,” he whispered, while Lestie wished he wouldn’t. “I know they brought those books to me.”

“Then, certainly, I am not the one to thank, but He who sent them.”

“I have not forgotten that.”

“Dr. St. James won’t like it,” said Paul.

“Like what?” Herbert asked.

“Horatio’s setting up for a doctor.”

“I’m not going to; I don’t know enough.”

“What’s the use of knowing so much?” returned Paul, “I don’t mean to.”

“When are the books coming?” asked Christie.

“Oh, I had forgotten the best part of it,” said Horatio, taking an apple from the basket. “I am to study in the old office; for the double purpose of keeping Miss Nettie company, and having a quiet room to study in.”

“Miss Nettie is so kind,” said Christie.

“I wish your father had a quiet place to study in,” said Mrs. Brentwell.

CHAPTER XIX.

"I have a name, a little name,
Uncadenced for the ear ;
Unhonored by ancestral claim,
Unsanctified by prayer and psalm
The solemn font anear."

—E. B. BROWNING.

A WEEK had elapsed before Thurston again found time to call at the rectory. A busy week, and it had seemed to him a long one. During that time he had been called upon and interviewed by all that portion of the male population of Newfield that he had not met before. He had returned calls, visited the sick, and when he entered the gate of the rectory that Saturday afternoon he felt that he knew every living person in Newfield, and that he had heard the history of every departed one ; and he was weary with so much knowledge.

Neither the clergyman nor his wife were at home, Horatio was at Miss Nettie's, no one knew where Paul was, and Christie was also out. Daisy and Lestie were sewing in the cheerful sitting-room, while Herbert read to them. They had become so interested in the story that neither perceived Thurston as he walked up the path leading to the door.

"Pshaw ! what does any one come for ?" said Lestie impatiently, as the knock was heard. "Go to the

door, Herbie, and tell them we are not at home. Give me the book to keep the place."

"I didn't see any one come in the gate," said Daisy, looking out to be certain of seeing the next one who came in. Herbert gave Lestie the book, and went to the door.

"Dr. St. James," Lestie announced, listening attentively; "and he's coming in. Oh, where'll I put this old dress?" referring to the article she was mending.

"Why keep it in your hand, or lay it on the table; he won't notice," returned Daisy.

"I guess not—such an old thing as this. I'll sit on it. Now don't ask me to get up once."

"I won't," Daisy laughed. Lestie hastily folded it up, and placed it on her chair, where she sat attentively reading when Thurston entered the room the next moment.

He shook hands with them, and Daisy rose to place him a chair, but Lestie remained seated.

He inquired after Mr. Brentwell, and seemed disappointed that he was absent.

"I have been trying," he said, after some other conversation, "to get here all of the past week, but I found it impossible; my time has been so very much taken up. I had not forgotten that I was to examine your lungs, Miss Brentwell, and if it is convenient to you I will do so now."

Daisy expressed her willingness; Lestie and Herbert looked anxiously on.

"Well," he said, when Daisy was at length, allowed to sit down, "Neither of your lungs is diseased—"

“Aren’t they really?” cried Herbert, joyfully.

“No; but the left one is weak. It can be strengthened however; it must be, for if not it may be diseased soon.” He seated himself.

“Well,” said Daisy, looking up, “what am I to do?”

“The best thing for you would be a trip South,” said Thurston.

“I cannot go,” Daisy said sadly. “Is there nothing else?”

“Yes, of course,” he said in a doubtful tone.

“Yes, you shall go, Daisy,” said Herbert; “Horatio will take you, I know.”

“And I’ll go along to take care of you,” added Lestie obligingly.

Thurston was silent.

“What else?” Daisy asked, after a moment of silence.

“What else? Nothing else is needed,” he said.

“But I cannot go, Dr. St. James,” returned Daisy, in a trembling voice.

“But you must,” returned Herbert; “father will want you to.”

“That may be,” she said simply.

“It will be necessary,” the physician went on, “for you to take a great deal of out-door exercise in fine weather, and never to go out in a storm.”

“Yes sir,” hopelessly.

“Do you sew much?”

“A great deal.”

“It would be well for you to do as little as possible. For the present I can only tell you to be very careful not to catch cold ; and,” he added smilingly, “we don’t know what may happen before the summer is over. It is not impossible that you may go South ; we will hope so.”

“Oh, it is impossible,” said Daisy.

“I think it is possible,” said Herbert, remembering Horatio’s books and the answered prayer.

Thurston had secretly determined that she should go, that he himself should take her—not as her physician alone ; but he was not prepared at present to state the terms, so he said no more about it. He drew a small book from his pocket.

“This is ‘Evangeline,’ Miss Brentwell,” giving it to her.

She thanked him as she took it.

“What a beautiful face,” she cried, opening to the frontispiece.

“The heroine Evangeline.”

Daisy studied the dark, sad face silently. Lestie inquired after Silas in the meantime.

“He went home last night,” said Thurston, “to see his father about the picnic in July, and to make some arrangements.”

“He’s in a hurry,” said Herbert.

“So I told him ; but he is very impatient for the time to come, and he thinks he will hasten it by having all matters well attended to. At least there will be no delay then.”

“I wish it were July now,” returned Lestie; “I can hardly wait for the summer.”

“It will soon be here,” said Thurston; “too soon, it may be. I never wish for time to pass, Miss Lestie; I don’t think it is right to do so; not only because it is not ours, and because every moment is so valuable and such a precious gift of itself, but we are unconsciously wishing many lives away. There are thousands alive and well this day, who will be dead on that bright July day, when we sail up the river with Silas.”

“Yes,” said Lestie, “I know that.”

“It is not impossible that one of us may be taken.”

“Not Daisy?” said Herbert quickly.

Thurston smiled.

“Your sister is in no more immediate danger than you are yourself, Master Herbert. I once read a poem,” he added, “on this subject, that checked all longings for time to pass. It was called, ‘If we knew.’ Have you ever heard it?”

Lestie replied that she had not.

“Daisy looked up from her book.

“Can you repeat it?” she asked.

“I don’t remember the whole of it, but I will repeat what I do remember. The first verse is,

‘If we knew the woe and heartache
Waiting us down the road,
If our lips could taste the wormwood,
If our backs could feel the load,
Would we waste the day in wishing
For a time that ne’er can be?
Would we wait in such impatience
For our ships to come from sea?’

“And the last two are,

‘Lips from which the seal of silence
None but God can roll away,
Never blossomed in such beauty
As adorns the mouth to-day ;
And sweet words that freight our **memory**
With their beautiful perfume,
Come to us in sweeter accents
Through the portals of the tomb.

‘Let us gather up the sunbeams
Lying all around our path ;
Let us keep the wheat and roses,
Casting out the thorns and chaff
Let us find our sweetest comfort
In the blessing of to-day,
With a patient hand removing
All the briars from our way.”

“It is very beautiful,” Daisy said, but Lestie, not understanding or appreciating, still longed for that bright summer day.

The doctor took the “Evangeline” which Daisy had laid down when listening to the poem.

“May I read you a little ?” he asked.

“Oh do,” said Daisy, “we would like to hear it.”

“Yes,” added Herbert, “do read to us.”

And so he did—for nearly an hour, while his hearers sat almost breathless. Herbert drew a long sigh as he laid the book on the table again. All this time, let it be remembered, Lestie had not had it in her hands and the waiting had been hard for her. While Daisy and the young physician talked of the poem, she, forgetting the soiled dress that she sat upon, left her seat to obtain it.

The dress, however, did not forget her, but hooked itself in some ingenious manner to the bottom of the one she wore, and dragged after her as she walked, forming a magnificent train, which considering her admiration for sweeping robes should have pleased her. She thought that her dress felt heavy around the bottom, but she was so intent upon getting possession of "Evangeline" that she did not heed, until Herbert said,

"What's that caught into your dress, Lestie?" Then she turned and saw it. How she wished the floor would open, and let her gently into the cellar! Why had she forgotten? She thought of it but a moment before!

"Take it off," she whispered to Herbert. Daisy had seen the train from the first, and had done her best to engage the doctor's whole attention; but that was impossible, attentive as he appeared to be; for Lestie stood directly in front of him, and he was one of those unfortunate persons who see all and everything that transpires around them. We often meet such persons ourselves. Every thing about them is always just as it should be; try our best, we can find no fault, and we do wish sometimes that we could—something that we could laugh over in secret, as we know they have laughed at us. It is before these persons that all our mishaps occur. Their presence often leads us on to blunders.

How Lestie wished, as she returned to her seat, still holding the book, that something would happen to make Thurston—stylish, elegant Thurston—appear ridiculous. She was very angry with him; for she fancied that he

wanted to laugh at her : no matter if he did look grave and was so dignified, he didn't feel it, and he *did* feel like laughing at her—that was certain, and she never would forgive him—that was certain too !

She opened the book at the fly-leaf, as was her custom, to see whose name was written upon it. “To my son, with the love of Deborah St. James,” was what she read.

“To my son, with the love of Deborah St. James,” she repeated aloud. “Do you hear that, Daisy ? Deborah St. James.”

“Is it Deborah ?” said Herbert, looking over his sister's shoulder.

“Indeed !” said Daisy, wishing Lestie was more polite.

“Ain't it queer ?” continued Lestie, forgetting her late train.

“There are many persons by that name,” Daisy returned quietly.

“Are there ?” said Herbert, with his eyes still on the delicate writing. “I thought you were the only one.”

“Why no.”

“Deborah !” repeated Thurston, who had been annoyed by the use of the adjective “queer,” not understanding its application. “Deborah ! is that your Christian name, Miss Brentwell ?”

“Yes,” Lestie answered kindly for her; “but we never call her by it because mother don't like it; and we all think it's ugly.”

"I am surprised. It is one of the most beautiful names in the world to me," said Thurston, thinking of his mother.

"Well, mother don't like it," said Lestie conclusively, "and we don't."

"And you, Miss Brentwell?"

"I scarcely know," answered Daisy. One hour before she would have declared that it was the ugliest name woman ever answered to: "I have never been called by it, and it does not seem as though it were mine. I might like it if I heard it often."

If Paul had been present, he would have unhesitatingly reminded her of the time she hid his ball for calling her Deborah before some company; and how, when he continued to call her by it for spite, (having found the ball after diligent search) she had broken off three of his finest sun-flowers—but that was last summer, and Paul was not in the house, but just coming in the gate.

"And so during all these years of your life they have not allowed you the privilege of being called by your own name? That is too bad, Miss Brentwell, if I were called by any other name than my own I should not bear it so quietly," he laughed, as he arose. "At any rate," he added, drawing his overcoat on, "I shall do all in my power to restore Miss Deborah Brentwell to health, but for *Miss Daisy* I promise nothing."

A loud bang at the front door, an Indian whoop, kicks on the sitting-room door, and Paul stood before

them. He was delighted to see the doctor, and greeted him demonstratively. "Don't go now I've come," he said, throwing his hat at the cat.

"I'm not going because you have come," said Thurston, "but Mrs. Barker's supper will be waiting."

"Stay here to supper. We've got lots of gingerbread. Mother made some to-day, and she made me a horse and a man."

"Thank you. Your offer is tempting, but I cannot remain. Good afternoon, Miss Brentwell," shaking hands with her. "Give my respects to your father, and tell him that I am not an Episcopalian yet. Remember me to your mother, and your oldest brother—"

"Horatio ain't coming home to supper," interrupted Paul. "I met him in the street with Miss Nettie, and she said so. I say," to the doctor, "you don't know what Horatio's doing now-a-days?"

"No," returned Thurston, shaking hands with Lestie, "I don't know."

"He's at Miss Nettie's. He was going to set up doctoring, but we thought you wouldn't like it."

"I am quite willing," the doctor said laughingly, as he left the house.

CHAPTER XX.

“What shall I do for thee, glorious one ?
To soothe thy sorrows my soul aspires.
Speak ! and say how the Saxon's son
May atone for the wrongs of his ruthless sires ! ”

“He speaks, he speaks !—that noble chief !
From his marble lips deep accents come ;
And I catch the sound of his mighty grief,—
‘ Ple' gi' me t'ree cent for git some rum. ’ ”

THURSTON stopped at the Post-Office on his way home. There were letters for himself ; and a delicate missive heavily edged with black for Mrs. Barker, post-marked Philadelphia.

They were waiting tea for him. He sat down in silence, and listened mechanically to the widow's views of Mrs. Pepper's new bonnet and its origin. He dreaded giving her the letter, fearing that it might contain bad news of her daughter. But at length he said, “Have you heard from Mrs. Scott lately ?”

The widow, who had paused in her comments for refreshments, looked over the saucer from which she was drinking her tea.

“No,” she said, setting the saucer down and refilling it from her cup ; “not for two weeks.”

Then he took the letter from his pocket, and gave it to her.

“Who’s dead?” she took it with trembling fingers. “’Melie, open it quick! I’m all of a tremble; I can’t do a thing.”

Miss Amelia tore the envelop off.

“It’s from Jessie, Mary,” she said, holding it at arm’s length.

“Jessie! are you sure?” doubtfully.

“It begins ‘Darling Mamma,’ and ends ‘Jessie,’ but I can’t see well without my glasses.”

“Silas will read it,” the widow said anxiously.

Silas, who usually read Mrs. Scott’s letters to them, readily complied with the request.

“Darling mamma,” it began, “don’t, I beg, allow yourself to be frightened at the mourning wreath of this letter, fearing that your only and beloved daughter has fallen a victim to death’s ruthless hand. Nay, dear mother, I am yet alive, and ready to pour into your sympathizing bosom the woofullest of tales. Ah! that I were never born. Mamma, dear mamma, why, why came I to this terrestrial sphere?”

“Law sakes!” cried Mrs. Barker, “what can be the matter?”

“Mamma,” Silas read on, “my heart is broken—broken. Ah! that I were beside thee to unbosom my whole soul—my sad soul; to pour into thy ear all that I endure; to tell thee of the living death, the dying life that I am living. You wonder, doubtless, why I, your happy, your joyous daughter, should have this sorrow; should be thus weighed down with care. Ah, too well you know the

pangs. This you felt when you saw my father lowered into his narrow tomb—his last resting place. My husband, my noble hearted knight, the companion of my life, he who shared alike my joys and sorrows is dead—is dead, dead. He has left me to bear the sorrow alone. And now behold me, your little rainbow-clad Jessie, sitting draped in deepest mourning. Ah, clouds of darkness to my soul! ah, robes of midnight! I shall ne'er discard them again; through all my life will I be enshrouded in this mantle. No more rainbow garments for Jessie—little broken-hearted Jessie; no, no, naught but these yards of blackness.

“Mamma, mourning is more becoming to me than I had any idea it would be. “Byron, my noble lord—ah, more noble, more kingly than his namesake—was thrown from his horse a week ago last Tuesday, and instantly killed. My beloved husband went forth so full of warm life, and was brought home to me cold and dead. I draw a veil over all that followed. He was buried on Saturday, and it was the largest funeral I ever attended. All of his friends came to it; and he has so many. There were some whom he had not seen in a long time, who came a great distance to attend the last sad rites. I could not help wishing that he was alive to see them: it would have given him so much pleasure. My mother and sisters-in-law do act so strangely. Louie, the youngest, has been in bed ever since, and would not even get up to see the funeral procession—and it was such a grand sight. One of the servants

described it to me ; of course, being in it, I could not see it. Mrs. Scott has such poor taste ; she was not at all interested in her mourning. I had to take charge of every thing. Susie hates it so that she will hardly wear it. Well, no wonder : it makes her look like a fright.

“ I always used to think that Ida loved dear Byron ; she was around him so much—her affection was certainly annoying to him at times ; but she acts now as if she had no heart. She never speaks of him, and leaves the room if any one else does. And, darling mamma, at the funeral, where my sobs and extreme grief attracted so much sympathy, *she never shed a tear*, but sat bolt upright, staring ahead of her. As he was their only brother, I should think that they would care more than they do. Of course, they cannot be expected to grieve as I do : any one can see that I am heart-broken.

“ For the next month, I shall be busy with lawyers, having the property settled, then I shall be able to make some arrangements for my future home. I feel that my first duty is to my widowed mother, and to you I shall come in June. Then, in that joyous summer month, I shall fly into your arms, and weep my grief away, pillowed upon that heart whose tenderness I can never doubt.

“ You have written me that your rooms are now all occupied. There will have to be some alterations in the house before I come ; and I intend sending new furniture, and bringing a servant with me. The wings

can each be raised a story and also extended the whole depth of the house ; and then the kitchen will have light enough still, and there will be six new rooms. You will be willing, no doubt, darling mamma and dear aunt, to make this improvement. Trusting that you would I have made arrangements, and the workmen will be in Newfield next Monday to go to work on Tuesday. If they discommode you at all, I will pay your board at the hotel, and the difference also that it would make to your two boarders. Dr. St. James, you write, is of Philadelphia.

“ Write soon, dear mother. Comfort me in my affliction. With love to dear aunt I close,

“ Your loving, sorrowing

“ JESSIE.”

“ Well, I do say,” cried the widow, “ Byron Scott dead ! It beats me out. Jessie must be heart-broken.”

“ Poor, poor girl,” said Miss Amelia, who during the reading had alternately wept at the sad news it contained, and been delighted at the grand bursts of rhetoric. Mrs. Barker had been very much affected by its poetical composition too, and had anxiously watched the doctor to see the effect of so much fine writing upon him. He betrayed no emotions, but went quietly on eating his supper. He expressed his sorrow for the daughter’s affliction in a few words, but said nothing of the letter.

“ Yes, poor girl,” the widow went on, “ no wonder

she wants to get home to me ; no wonder ; Byron did set the world by her, and now he's dead and Jessie's a widow, like her mother. What did she say, Silas, about the house ? When are the workmen coming ? ”

“ On Monday they will be here, and will begin the work on Tuesday.”

“ I wonder how the old house will look all altered up. I suppose it's likely I'll like it when it's done, but it don't seem so now.”

“ It ain't over big now, you know, Mary.”

“ What did she say she was going to bring with her, Silas ? ”

“ A servant.”

“ A hired girl,” explained Miss Amelia.

“ She don't say whether it is a hired girl or a hired man,” returned the widow wisely. “ I wonder what we'll do with it.”

“ Jessie will need her to wait on her,” said Miss Amelia.

“ What did she say, Silas, about the Scotts ? that they didn't seem to care ? ”

“ Oh, no, Mrs. Barker, I understood from it that they felt very badly indeed,” said Silas, taking up the letter again.

“ Just read over that part about Ida and the rest,” said Mrs. Barker. “ There,” she said, when he had read it. “ I told you so ; that girl never shed a tear.”

“ Neither did Miss Nettie shed a tear when the

Doctor died," said Silas ; "and we all know how she grieved for him."

"I was calling on Miss Nettie yesterday," said the widow, changing the subject. "She's quite lively now that Horatio Brentwell is there. I didn't know, doctor, that women folks could teach medicine."

"They cannot."

"But Miss Nettie does. She teaches Horatio every day. He says lessons to her out of the medicine books."

"Was Horatio studying with Dr. Doreann?" Thurston asked.

"Law, yes, studying very hard," said Mrs. Barker ; "and some says that he was most up to the old doctor when he died. Horatio's heart was set on being a physician, and he was afraid he would have to give it up, but now he's going right on."

"Did you know of this, Silas?" Thurston asked.

"I knew that he had been studying with Dr. Doreann, but I didn't know that he studied with Miss Nettie now."

"Which is impossible," Thurston said, as he arose from the table. "He is, without doubt, trying to do so alone."

He went back into his office and sat down by the window in the gathering twilight. He thought of the struggling boy, and admired his determination. "Yes," he said, at length, "I will do it, I'll call there next week and ask to see him, and talk it over with him."

It is strange that I have not seen him there in any of my calls. But I remember now Miss Nettie always shuts the office door very carefully. They have tried to keep it from me, thinking I would be displeased, I suppose. That little rogue of a Paul almost let it out to-day. Yes, I'll do it."

And he did. He made a call upon Horatio the next week, and there was a long private conversation. When that was ended, and the doctor had gone, Horatio hastened home with a light, happy heart to find a cosy supper awaiting him, and the whole family sitting by, anxious to hear the reason of his delay.

Lestie, as usual, began the examination. Daisy poured his tea, Mrs. Brentwell brought warm biscuits from the oven, and Christie gave him the choice bit of cake which she had saved for him.

"What made you so late?" Lestie asked.

"I was so hungry," returned Horatio, with his mouth full, "that I hadn't strength to walk scarcely. So I just crept along. If Paul had been there to help me I would have been here in season."

Paul, who was in his accustomed place on the floor, remodelling an old bag, cutting slashes, and taking enormous stitches, looked up greatly interested.

"Something has pleased Horatio," Mr. Brentwell said. The son nodded his head briskly.

"At the rate I am going now," he said, "I shall be through my supper in no time, then I'll relate my afternoon's experience. Meanwhile, Lestie, there is a

collar Miss Nettie sent to you. She said it was the real thing. I suppose you'll know : I don't."

Lestie did not know, but she remembered having seen Laura Van Pike wear a collar of the same pattern, and she thought from that fact that it must be of great value.

"Very old and very rare," Horatio said, with a wise look. Lestie tried it on before the mirror, and then tried it on Christie, while her tongue ran glibly. Her love of fine dress was even greater than her curiosity, and she quite forgot that Horatio had anything to communicate until he said, "I want to know who told Dr. St. James that I am studying at Miss Nettie's."

"The idea of wondering that," said Daisy. "Every one in Newfield who knows it has told him."

"I suppose that's about true. Still I was surprised when he called there to-day to see me—"

"Well," cried Lestie, with breathless attention, as he paused a moment.

"He wanted to see me," Horatio went on. "He hadn't looked in my face for so long, little sister, that he wanted to have one good look, and he was so well pleased with my face, when he had studied it, that he said he would like very much to have me in his office to look at, but I didn't think I could leave Miss Nettie, so I said no. It was a sad disappointment to him, but Miss Nettie was so well pleased that she gave me that collar for you."

"I don't believe one word you say," she cried.

“As long as you have the collar why need you care?” But Mr. Brentwell demanded a truthful account, and Horatio laid aside his jesting until a more convenient season. “Dr. St. James has heard somewhere,” he said, “that I am studying alone, and he came to offer his tuition and his office to study in.”

“And you refused?” said Mrs. Brentwell.

“No, mother, not exactly; but I told him I could not leave Miss Nettie on any account, that I must stay there while she lives; and he saw himself how ungrateful it would be in me to leave her alone again.”

“And now your only opportunity is gone,” said Mrs. Brentwell regretfully, remembering only her son and his ambition. Mr. Brentwell knit his brow, and wondered if *he* would have the strength to refuse such an offer.

“It did seem to me that I was throwing away my only chance to study as I should; but it was only for a moment. The doctor proposed that I should spend two afternoons and one evening of every week with him, and made the arrangement with Miss Nettie. That dear old lady would unselfishly have sent me off altogether, but I would not listen to a word of it. Oh, we had a grand time,” resuming his jesting tone. “It was as good as a theatre. You ought to have been there, Lestie.”

“What about the collar?” she demanded.

“I haven’t told you all yet. I arranged with Miss Nettie that one of my sisters should spend with her the afternoon that I am away.”

“Certainly,” said Mrs. Brentwell smiling.

“The doctor said that Silas and he would be around this evening to talk over everything, and I am to be arranged and attended to generally. Now, Lestie, about that collar. Miss Nettie gave it to me just as I was coming away—as a reward for my choosing to remain with her; for she knew well the pleasure it would afford me to give it to you. There, I’ve told all I know. If you want any more you must make it yourself. Heigho! make it yourself!”

He turned his face to the wall, and listened silently to the lively conversation that followed. All his burdens had been graciously lifted from his shoulders, and he felt that his life would be a happy one. “Oh, thou of little faith!” he murmured to himself, “of little faith, of little faith, He has brought me safely through, yet I refused to cast my care upon Him. Of little faith.” He breathed a heartfelt prayer of thankfulness, and being wearied from the day’s hard study, he sank to sleep, and did not wake until Thurston and Silas came.

The doctor had brought some cough medicine for Daisy, and immediately entered into a discussion with Mr. Brentwell on the subject of her going south, and had the pleasure again of hearing that it was an impossibility. Silas, meanwhile sitting afar, had the happiness of seeing Christie knit, of knowing that she did knit, of seeing that she held her needles just as his mother did; and what bliss it was! And she joined so sweetly in the conversation he was carrying on with Horatio, and was interested—he never could forget

that, no never—when he said that he, too, was intending to study medicine, and that he should begin as soon as the school year was closed. Neither would he ever forget the pleasure she expressed when he spoke of all the plans for their week on the Island being fairly arranged. There came an end to all this bliss ; for there came such a knocking at the outer door that every one stopped talking, and every one fell to thinking only of Mother Wade as she sailed in, when that door was opened. She bowed profoundly to the company assembled, and shook hands with every one from Mr. Brentwell down to Paul.

CHAPTER XXI.

“Away, away from men and towns,
To the wildwood and the downs.”

—SHELLEY.

APRIL had brushed the farewell tears from her eyes. Her last coquettish smile had flown, and she was unceremoniously sent into the past to give place to her sweet sister May. And now May in her old age was making the best of her few last days: June was approaching.

Besides a long discussion between Mr. Brentwell and the doctor, whereby the three orders were proved by St. Timothy's consecration to the Bishopric of Ephesus—which if related would not be read—but one noteworthy event had occurred. That event was the marriage of Maria Morris, for whom the quilts were quilted long ago. She had been united in the holy bonds to a tall, awkward young man from the very depths of the country, bearing the name of John West. There had been quite a wedding party, and the ceremony of course had been performed by Mr. Brentwell.

The groom during the greater part of it seemed more impressed with the fact that “the parson had to be paid for the job,” than anything else. He felt that the money must be given in a delicate way, so that Mr.

Brentwell's pride would not be wounded. He had thought once of settling the bill when he asked the clergyman to officiate, but his father, whom he wisely consulted, reckoned that that was not exactly manners, "leastwise, he hadn't paid the parson that way when he was married, and he'd got through all straight. He didn't believe in giving the cash until it was earned." John was a dutiful son, and having found from his youth up that his sire's advice concerning crops and cattle was well worth following, he followed the advice in this case, and waited until Maria and he were one before he paid the clergyman. Yet the delicate manner in which it was to be done had not been decided upon. There was a great deal of planning and talking, and at length a happy thought struck John's highly respected maiden aunt. She suggested that the money should be placed under Mr. Brentwell's plate at the wedding supper. Here the advantage would be double: Mr. Brentwell would be saved the embarrassment of receiving the money publicly from John, and the company assembled would see and know the groom's liberality. It was done, but unfortunately West had decided to pay him in change. So when Mr. Brentwell lifted up his plate, observed of all observers—being the first one who, in virtue of his office, was waited upon—a shower of copper and silver was thrown on his lap and on the floor. For the moment there was a great excitement. Every one helped to pick it up, and at last, when it was all found and the confusion subsided, Mr. West made the speech

he had long been desiring to make, but had not known exactly where to bring it in. “ You earned that, parson, every cent of it. Anybody who would marry Maria and me would earn it, and I don’t begrudge it—no I wouldn’t begrudge it if it was five dollars—almost.”

When they reached home that evening, Mr. Brentwell, with Lestie’s assistance, patiently counted the money and found it to be *two dollars and eighty-three cents*. Horatio proposed sending the three cents back, as it must have been an oversight, but Paul urged the great cost of balls and tops so strongly that it was bestowed upon him.

The rectory gardens had been planted, and the young gardeners were already rejoicing in the signs of rapid growth. Horatio was making great progress in his studies under the doctor’s tuition, and Daisy was slowly regaining health and strength. Following Thurston’s advice, she spent a portion of her time in the open air, and the color was coming back into her cheeks, and new life blood seemed to be flowing through her veins. Yes, she was improving as she never had under Dr. Doreann’s treatment. Her parents said that Dr. St. James was a wonderful physician to work this change, and Daisy—well she had an opinion, but no one knew what it was.

About a half a mile above the rectory, on the river, was a small wood. The pleasure-seekers of Newfield called it a grove, and held their picnics there. The clergyman’s daughters spent many a bright afternoon

here with their books and sewing, and on Saturdays Herbert would accompany them. Paul considered it a very poor plan ; for it was necessary to pass through this wood on his way to Sam Lukens' hut, consequently he had not been able of late to visit that worthy as often as he desired.

It was on one of those warm afternoons in the latter part of May that we find them here. Daisy was seated on a high rock, weaving a wreath of early flowers. Lestie and Christie, with their sewing, were seated on a fallen tree, and Herbert, who had accompanied them, lay upon the grass reading aloud a novel. It was an intensely interesting book. The plot was intricate, and the characters were possessed of superhuman powers of action and discernment, and were constantly doing superhuman things. Wonderful secrets were discovered with the greatest ease : every one had the power of reading another's face as we simple people read books. so not a thought or an emotion could be kept a secret from the world. The wicked ones had everything their own way, and the good—that is the moral, for religion was entirely overlooked—had only a series of misfortunes and calamities. The most striking event was a wonderful Fortune which a terribly crooked, withered old gypsy in red had told the heroine in the first chapter, and the fulfillment of which was slowly but surely being brought out in each succeeding chapter ; and as each separate prophecy was fulfilled the heroine would tragically clasp her hands and moan or cry out or mur-

mur or shriek or scream or weep, or whatever best suited the occasion, "Alas ! alas ! the gypsy's prophecy. Evil was the day I listened to her dark prognostications. Fate, fate, how hast thou enveloped me in thine iron clasp ! Is there no eluding thee ?"

"There !" exclaimed Lestie, when, according to the prophecy, the heroine had rescued a surpassingly handsome youth from drowning in the river that ran by her father's abode, and fallen in love with him at first sight as he had with her ; "There !" looking anxiously up the river for a drowning youth, "I'm going to have my fortune told the first opportunity."

"There ain't any gypsies in Newfield," said Herbert, looking on the last page to see if she married the rescued youth.

"Oh, other people besides gypsies can tell them. Martha Morris' great aunt knows how, and I mean to have her tell mine. Martha says that she has told quantities of people's, and the predictions always come true."

"Mother won't let you," said Herbert.

"I'll coax her till she does."

"What did she ever tell that has come true ?" asked Christie.

"Why, she told one girl that she was going to have a letter and two presents and an invitation to a sleigh-ride, and that she is to marry a very rich, handsome young man, who will just adore her, and give her everything she wants."

"Well," said Daisy, "has it all happened ?"

“Yes, sir,” emphatically, “she got a letter that very evening, and a few days afterwards her aunt gave her a handkerchief, and her mother bought her a new dress—”

“And her father gave her her dinner,” added Herbert.

“You be still ; you don’t know anything about it. She got the invitation to the sleigh-ride too.”

“Is she married to that man yet ?” asked Daisy.

“No—o ; not yet.”

“Is she engaged to him yet ?” asked Herbert.

“No—o,” doubtfully.

“Has she made his acquaintance yet ?” asked Christie.

“I don’t know,” very sharply.

“Just let her know that I’ll be at the wedding,” said Herbert ; “it may encourage her.” He resumed his reading. More wonderful events were related. Among other things the rescued youth confessed himself to be the heir to a princely fortune, and confided to the fair maid that the drowning scene had been planned by his affectionate relatives, and they, fearing that the responsibility accompanying such wealth would be too great for him, had kindly hired certain men to lay him gently down in the bosom of the calm river ; and they, the affectionate relatives, had decided to take the burden of the wealth on their own shoulders. The heroine cried out again at this recital against the fate that enveloped her in its cruel arms ; for this, too, the gypsy had foretold.

Lestie, very much impressed, reiterated her determination to have her fortune revealed to her.

“You had better lay the book aside, Herbert,” said Daisy. “I didn’t think Lestie would place so much faith in it.”

“Go on, Herbert,” Lestie said, “I want to hear the end.”

“You don’t realize,” continued Daisy, “that there is not one word of truth in it, and that such a fulfillment of a prophecy would be impossible.”

“The prophecies in the Bible were fulfilled.”

“Oh, Lestie, they were inspired.”

“I’m sorry we began it,” said Christie, “such a book always has a bad influence over the reader.”

“Well, as we’ve begun it,” said Lestie, “we might as well finish it. Go on, Herbert.”

“Helloa, there!” cried a voice from afar. “Where are you?”

“There’s Paul,” said Lestie crossly. “What on earth can the little torment want now? Don’t answer him.”

“Helloa, I say, Herb, helloa.”

“Helloa!” cried Herbert. “We’re down by the rock.”

“All right! I’m coming.” Voices were heard, and Christie leaning forward saw through the undergrowth that four feet were walking toward them. “Horatio is with him,” she announced.

“Horatio! are you sure?” said Daisy. “Help me

on with my wreath, girls, before he gets here. There ! that is it. Thank you."

"Oh, I knew I'd find 'em," Paul was heard to say pompously. "I know these woods like a book. They couldn't get where I couldn't find 'em."

"Your wreath is very becoming," Christie said, as she arranged the gay flowers among the dark curls. Voices and steps were coming nearer, and Paul appeared accompanied by Thurston St. James. Daisy forgot the wreath and Horatio, and remembered only that Thurston had come.

"Is this our queen to day?" the doctor said, bowing before her, after the usual greetings were over. Then Daisy remembering the flowers, wondered, as any woman would, if Christie had told the truth, or that it was only sisterly affection that made her say they were becoming.

"Yes, I am the queen," she laughed, blushing. "I thought that Horatio was with Paul," she added, fearing he might think her vain.

"Then this was all for him? Allow me to enjoy it in his stead."

"Will you sit down?" she said.

He seated himself near on the rock. "I was very fortunate in meeting Master Paul in the road, and he told me that you were here, and conducted me to you."

"It is strange we did not see you, if you came up the road. We can see the road all the way to Newfield from here," said Daisy.

“Yes, a fine view. I came from the village north ; Paul, I believe, came from Newfield.” Paul, who was intent upon throwing stones into the river, and watching to see if Sam’s boating expedition had set out yet, did not feel called upon to explain that instead of walking boldly along the road he had crept along the fences so that the brother and sisters would not see him. Neither did he mention that his destination had been Sam’s hut.

“I wish you had come sooner,” said Lestie to the doctor ; “Herbert’s been reading aloud such an interesting book. It is about a young lady who had her fortune told in the first chapter by an old gypsy woman, and every word of it comes true. I’m going to have mine told.”

“Are there any gypsies in this wood ? If any will make their appearance, we all might have our future read.”

“Oh, but I’m in earnest. Martha Morris’ aunt tells them, and they always come true.”

“Why, Lestie,” said Daisy, “we shall begin to think that you believe in it.”

“I do, almost.”

“It reminds me of an aunt of mine who once had her fortune told,” said Thurston. “The gypsy said that she was to be married three times. The first husband would be tallest, the second shorter, and the third quite short. She is sixty now, and her first husband is still alive, and he measures five feet four in his boots. If the second is to be shorter, what will the third be ?”

“That gypsy didn’t know,” explained Lestie.

“How dark it’s growing !” cried Herbert.

“There’s awful black clouds,” said Paul. “It’s going to rain, sure-pop.”

“And very soon,” added Thurston.

“It is strange that we haven’t noticed that a storm was coming up,” said Christie.

“We were so interested in the book,” said Lestie.

“We must get under shelter as soon as possible,” said the doctor. “Is there any short cut to New-field ?”

“The road is the shortest way,” said Herbert, “and it won’t take us two minutes to run home.”

“Then go immediately. You will hardly have time to reach the house before the rain begins. My carriage is at the fence, and I will take Miss Brentwell home in that. I am sorry that I cannot offer you all seats.”

“The run will not hurt us,” said Christie, gathering up their work. “Good-bye,” and they were gone. Thurston turned to Daisy.

“Where is your bonnet ?” he said, as he helped her from the rock.

“It was hung on that tree with the others. Oh ! it is not there. Where can it be ?”

“They must have taken it. Let my handkerchief supply its place.” He drew it from his pocket as he spoke. A small book came with it, and fell to the ground. He picked it up quickly, thankful that Daisy

was busy taking the wreath from her head, and did not notice it.

They hastened to the road.

“I have a little book of yours in my possession,” he said, when they were seated in the carriage. “I have had it a long time, and it was my duty long ago to restore it to you.” He laid it in her lap.

“My Prayer Book! I have searched the house over for it. Why, where did you get it?”

“Your father left it in my office the first time he called upon me. That was before I made your acquaintance. I have kept it by me ever since, and during the long rides I must take I study it most faithfully.”

“Father will be glad to hear that; it will give him such hopes of your conversion.”

“Your father! It is beginning to rain,” he added.

“I hope the children are home,” said she.

“They are not in sight,” he said. He was driving very slowly. “I don’t think,” he went on, “that I have studied it much for the sake of the church.”

“Were you interested in it? Then you are a better churchman than I am. I must tell father that, too.”

“Not at present: I have not finished studying it yet.”

“Have you one of your own?”

“No,” decidedly. A moment’s pause, then Daisy summoned courage to say,

“Do you want mine again?”

“I do,” very decidedly. So it went back into Thurston’s pocket just as he intended from the first that it should.

The rain was pouring in torrents when they reached the rectory gate. Horatio stood waiting with an umbrella in one hand, and the missing bonnet in the other. Mrs. Barker under another umbrella was also in waiting.

“It’s so fortunate,” she said, as the doctor lifted Daisy out, “that you come along just now. I’ve been wanting to go to Mis’ Pepper’s, and if it won’t be any trouble, I can go right along with you.”

The doctor said something about its being “a pleasure,” with his tongue, while his heart said “with regret.” He did not care to have any one take the seat that Daisy had left vacant by his side, but there was no alternative, and he assisted the widow in as politely as he had lifted Daisy out.

Mrs. Pepper’s yellow house was soon reached. Mrs. Barker alighted, and the doctor’s gig was again whirling down the street. Of course Mrs. Pepper was delighted to see Mrs. Barker. It had been two days since the friends had met, and all Newfield affairs sadly needed rearranging. Spring suits had appeared, removals had occurred, and various other things had taken place, and they had not commented upon them. They had entertained a few ideas alone, but thoughts, even on a neighbor’s bonnet, are stale when there is no sister ear into which these thoughts can be poured ; no sympathizing heart to listen to the most secret feelings con-

cerning new shawls and made-over dresses. As sister spirits did Mrs. Barker and Mrs. Pepper meet.

Mrs. Pepper brought out the big rocking-chair from the gloomy parlor, and placed it by the window for the widow.

The weather was commented upon, and the rain spoken ill of.

“Have you called on Mrs. Platt yet?” Mrs. Pepper asked, at length.— Mrs. Platt was the wife of the minister who had succeeded Mr. Borne.

“No, and I am ashamed to own it, too. ‘Melie’s been over though. She went the day they came, and carried them some hot biscuits and cold boiled meat. She said she knew that they couldn’t have anything to eat in the house when they’d just moved. She don’t take to ‘em like she did to the Borne. She had a letter from Mr. Borne the other day.”

“Do tell! What did he have to say?”

“He hasn’t any place yet, and Mrs. Borne and the children are at her uncle’s while he hunts one.”

“I do believe that if I heard they were going to call him any place that I would put a flea in their ear.”

“I wouldn’t do that,” said the widow, “but I wouldn’t want him back here. Mrs. Borne is quite miserable yet, he says. I reckon she ain’t long for this world.”

“I wonder if she is prepared to die. I never saw any religion in her.”

“Nor I.”

“The fact is, Mis’ Barker,” continued Mrs. Pepper, “Mis’ Borne never had a change of heart : she never was a Christian. Now there’s Mis’ Platt she *is* a Christian. I saw that the minute I set my foot inside of her door. There was the three oldest children sitting on the settee together, reading their Bibles, and the two little ones were looking out of the window as quiet as two mice. There wasn’t so much as a crumb on the floor, and all the children had clean faces and smooth hair—which no one could ever say of Mis’ Borne’s children. ‘Wal, Mis’ Platt,’ says I, ‘It’s certain that you know how to bring up your children in the way they should go.’ ‘Wal,’ says she, ‘I try my best. I don’t look very neat myself. I hope you’ll excuse it.’ There she was just as neat as a pin, and I told her so. ‘And the room,’ says she, ‘is a good deal upside down.’ There wasn’t a chair out of place or a thread on the floor ; and once when her back was turned, I lifted up the corner of the stove oil-cloth with my foot and looked under. There wasn’t a grain o’ dust there—*not a grain.*”

“And to think how Mis’ Borne’s house and children used to look,” exclaimed the widow.

“The worst of that was that she never made any apology for it, but just sat down and talked as cool as if she was a queen sitting in her palace. She didn’t know much about manners, and I thought I’d give her a lesson in ’em one day when she called. I wasn’t fixed up much, but laws ! I didn’t begin to look like she does half the time. ‘Mis’ Borne,’ I says, ‘I am ashamed to

be seen sitting down in this dress. It ain't often I'm caught looking like this. And so I kept on making excuses to let her know that *I* knew what is good manners. And what do you think she said? Now, 'most anybody that knew any thing would have said that my dress didn't look bad—and all that, but she says, 'Don't mention it, Mis' Pepper. I came to see you and not your dress.' I was taken down, you may know."

"If there's a person on earth," said the widow, "who ought to know manners, it's the minister's wife."

"That's so," cried Mrs. Pepper, "and she ought to know how to bring up her children. Did you ever see one of them Bornes' children when they hadn't their hands full of bread and butter, sprinkling crumbs all over? Well, I never did, and I was thinking about that when I was at Mis' Platt's. Little Maria says, 'Ma, can I have a piece of bread?' 'No,' says Mis' Platt; 'you know I don't let you eat between meals!' 'Please, Ma, do let me: I'm so hungry,' says Maria. 'Maria,' says Mis' Platt, 'if you ask me again, I'll put you to bed without your supper.' There wasn't another word out of that child's mouth. Now, that's what I call the right kind of government."

Mrs. Barker did not agree with her, but she made no comment: Mrs. Pepper did not make statements to have them contradicted. "Mis' Platt's a christian if ever there was one," Mrs. Pepper went on. "She gave me an account of her experience. It was very interesting. There ain't many of us who have such experiences to

relate, I can tell you. She talks about religion the whole time. I really felt refreshed when I came away, and Mr. Platt he's just the sweetest man. Did you ever hear such elegant prayers ! They take me right off of my feet. I hear your house is very fine," she added. "Is it finished ?"

"Yes, it is finished, and 'Melie and I think it's fine, but I don't suppose Mis' Scott will : she's been used to such grand things."

"When is she coming ?"

"Not for three weeks yet."

"The doctor'll be good company for her."

"'Melie was saying that, too."

"You must be careful they don't fall in love."

"Oh, poor Jessie won't ever get in love again. I suppose you've heard that she's turned 'Piscopal ?"

"Sakes, no ! How did that happen ? Mercy on us. Aint you terribly afflicted !"

"I did take it to heart a good deal, and wrote her a long letter. She wrote back that it was more stylish to be 'Piscopal, and that she had to."

By the time the rain ceased Newfield and inhabitants had been reviewed, and Mrs. Barker rose to go. She stopped a moment by the door to say that Daisy had ridden from the grove with the doctor and that they drove very slowly. Mrs. Pepper was duly shocked, and that evening it was reported at Mr. Green's store that Daisy and the doctor had been to Fairhope and back in the rain, and the horse had walked every step of the way.

CHAPTER XXII

“O dear ! O dear, my heart will break, I shall go stick stark staring wild !
Has ever a one seen any thing about the streets like a crying lost-looking
child ? ”

—THOMAS HOOD.

PAUL daily, almost hourly grew to be a worse child. We might say momentarily ; for who can stand still an instant ? Every moment in our lives marks a step onward in grace or backward in guilt. It is an awful knowledge ! How we wish sometimes that we could stand still just for a moment, as if to recover ourselves, and even while we indulge these vain wishes we are retrograding ! We give one hasty glance over the multitudes that inhabit this earth, and the thought comes to us that of the millions every one has his own separate account to render, and each at this moment is either growing in grace or falling yet farther away : they are divided ; not one stands still. And we ask ourselves involuntarily, “ On which side do I stand ? do I grow in grace or do I grow in sin ? ” Deep, deep into our hearts should that question sink, and there live, reminding us every moment of our duty. In each single act of life, every thought and word, we should ask ourselves, “ does this retard my growth, or does it quicken it ? ” Whether we eat or whether we

drink it should be all for the glory of God and for our growth in grace.

Paul certainly did not grow in grace : he certainly did retard. Sam was visited almost daily, not only after school hours, but he frequently ran away to go there. The old man had set him lessons of vice, and he had learned them eagerly—so rapidly did he grow in wickedness. Paul was often absent from supper, coming home in time for the few remains of the meal with some threadbare excuse for his delay. This had gone on for some time when one evening he had not made his appearance by seven o'clock. Mr. Brentwell had gone to Fairhope on business, and Horatio remained to tea with Miss Nettie.

Herbert searched the village through for the truant, and returned home unsuccessful. Paul was not to be found ; no one had seen him, or had forgotten the very common sight if they had. Half past seven ! and still Paul did not return to the bosom of his family. If Horatio were there, they said, he might have found him.

“ Well, perhaps he might,” said Herbert. “ I’d give him leave to try. I’ve done my best, I’m sure. I’ve been in every street and alley in Newfield, and I’ve asked people until I’m ashamed.”

“ Did you go to Sam’s hut ? ” asked Lestie.

“ Yes, I even went there ; but it was empty.”

“ Then,” said Christie, “ he’s off boating with Sam.”

“ The poor boy will be drowned,” said Mrs. Brentwell.

“ The old villain,” cried Lestie.

“Herbert,” said Daisy, “can’t you go and bring him back when they land?”

“I tried that once, and you remember the result. Paul wouldn’t come because the boys laughed at him, and Sam sent me off flying. If father or Horatio were here they could get him; he minds them a little.”

“He minds me sometimes,” said Daisy, “Sam wouldn’t send me off, would he?”

“You! he wouldn’t get a chance.”

“Yes he would; I think I’ll go.”

“Go where?” said Christie.

“After Paul.”

“What a crazy idea,” said Lestie, who had just decided to go herself; “you couldn’t do anything with him.”

“I think I could. What do you think, mother? The days are so long that I will be home before dark.”

“If there is no danger you had better go.”

“There is none,” said Herbert. “Sam wouldn’t say anything to a lady; and if you kind o’ happen along I shouldn’t be surprised if Paul would come with you, especially if you tell him you are afraid to come home alone.”

“And I’ll go with you,” said Lestie, “and give that old man a piece of my mind.”

“No, Lestie; stay where you are,” said Daisy, “if too many go he’ll know it’s done on purpose.”

“Then you stay home, and let me go.”

“Paul wouldn’t come with you,” said Herbert.

“You must stay at home,” said Mrs. Brentwell. “You could do no good because you have lost all your influence over him by your constant quarrelling. Don’t go up stairs for your bonnet, Daisy ; take that red scarf of mine and throw it over your head. There ! it is a great deal more suitable for the night air. Don’t be gone any longer than you can help ; for I shall be worried until you get back.”

“There is no danger, mother,” Daisy said, as she ran out of the door, “and if Horatio comes you can send him after me.”

“She walked quickly up the street. She was afraid that they might have landed already, and if they had, she would never dare to enter the hut. It required a great deal of courage to walk through the little wood, but Daisy was equal to it just then, and scarcely thought of its shadows.

The hut stood out in bold relief by the water-side. There were no signs of life near. She went up to it and listened ; no sound came from it. She walked slowly by. It was empty. They had not returned and how thankful she was ! She turned and looked up the river, hoping to see the boat approaching, and Paul ready to forsake his sinful companions and fly into her arms. But no such sight greeted her vision ; there was no Paul, or no boat ; there was nothing, in fact, to be seen. She had not anticipated waiting here any length of time alone, and then returning when it was dark. She had imagined that Paul would just be nearing the shore, and

that they would go away quietly together, Sam bowing them off. She sat down on a rude bench by the river, with her heart aching for that little brother's sins. Her thoughts were so wrapt in Paul and his coming that she did not hear footsteps in the road, or know that another person was near until a voice said,

"Miss Brentwell, is it possible that you are here alone, and at this hour?"

She turned quickly. Thurston St. James stood beside her. Every burden dropped. No longer need she feel the gathering darkness; here was protection. She need not dread the encounter with Sam—as with second thought she did; here was some one to rescue Paul: and surely when Paul saw what a good and noble man the doctor was, he would forsake the paths of wickedness, and try to grow like him.

Her face showed her joy at the meeting. She held out her hand to greet him. "Dr. St. James," she cried, "is it really you? I am so glad."

"It is really I," he said, sitting down beside her, keeping her hand in his own, and she, poor girl could only let it lie there, "and I am glad that it is."

"I did not hear you coming."

"You were so intent upon the river."

"Oh, yes! I am looking for Paul. He is on it somewhere—and in such company."

Thurston glanced toward the empty hut, and knew what company. "And you are waiting for him?"

"Yes," she said, trying after all this time to with-

draw her hand. But he held it. "Daisy," he said tenderly, "I have taken this hand to keep. May I have it, darling?"

She must have said "yes" after a while; but the evening drew its dark curtains around them, so that we could see no more; and they spoke low, so low that no ear could hear their whispered vows.

Perhaps it was a long time afterwards, perhaps it was a short time—they certainly did not know, when they were reminded of the world and worldly beings by the sound of voices on the river. There, just discernible in the gathering night, was Sam's boat crowded with boys. They were shouting and laughing and talking, and some were swearing great oaths. Paul's voice sounded out among the rest.

Tears were in Daisy's eyes. "My poor little brother," she said. "This will break my father's heart."

"Sit here," said Thurston, "and I will go down to the boat as they land, and get him."

He met the boat at the landing.

"Well," said Sam, springing out, "what do you want?"

"I want Paul Brentwell," answered the doctor, sternly. "Paul," he called.

The child stood silent and undetermined. Should he submit to this new government and be laughed at by his companions, or should he take his stand by Sam and manfully maintain it.

“Going, Paul?” whispered a boy, sneeringly. That decided him : he would stay.

“I ain’t going home now,” he muttered.

“Yes, you are. Come right away.”

“None of this interference,” cried Sam, busy with the fastenings of the boat. “Leave the boy alone : he’s nothing to you.”

Thurston made no reply, but, taking Paul by the arm, dragged him away.

“Good night, dearie,” cried one boy.

“That’s a good boy,” cried another. “Go right along : I would.”

“I aint going home,” cried Paul, struggling to free himself.

“Swear at him,” urged a tall, red-haired, ragged, freckled, long-nosed young gentleman. “He’s none o’ your’n.”

“Let go,” cried Paul, not daring to follow this piece of wholesome advice. Sam, having secured the boat, interfered again, almost tearing Paul from Thurston’s grasp. The boys shouted, and Paul raised a feeble “hello” of triumph, which brought Daisy to the spot.

Where man’s strength fails, woman’s weakness wins. She caught her brother away from Sam, who turned away unresisting. “Take him,” she cried to the doctor, who, obeying her literally, took the rebellious child in his strong arms, and walked swiftly away with him. Daisy did not follow directly ; she stood for one moment looking at Sam. Face to face were the old fisherman

and the fair young girl. She was very angry, and her temper blazed out of her eyes upon him. For a moment, only for a moment; then she turned and ran to Thurston, who stood waiting in the road.

“You can set Paul on the ground, I think,” she said, vainly trying to conceal her anger.

Thurston saw that she was excited, and Paul cried, “Going off into one of your tantrums; I would. You haven’t been mad this week. Let go,” he cried to the doctor, who having set him on the ground, still held him.

Thurston drew Daisy’s hand into his arm, and walked on, paying no heed to Paul.

“Are you going to let go? I’ll bite,” suiting the action to the word.

“Paul,” he said, sternly. “What teeth you have,” he added, suddenly. “One moment,” he whispered to Daisy, as he disengaged his arm and holding Paul with that hand, grasped the boy’s collar with the other. “Now, we will go on,” he said, drawing Daisy’s hand in his arm again.

“Oh, Paul,” Daisy said, through her tears, “why do you distress us so? dear brother!”

“I ain’t your ‘dear brother’ and never was. You can’t come that over me. Let me go, will you?” to the doctor, who vouchsafed no reply.

“Have you had any supper?” asked Daisy.

“Don’t want any. Will you let me go? I’ll take my coat off—so I will, and let you hang on to it all night if you want to.”

“Is that scarf a sufficient protection for your head?”
Thurston whispered to Daisy.

“Oh, yes! I am very warm.”

“Your cheeks are flushed.”

“I was so angry,” she whispered, regretfully.

“My darling,” he murmured.

“What are you talking about?” demanded Paul.
“Any body knows that whispering ain’t polite in company.”

“Paul, Paul,” cried Daisy entreatingly.

“Don’t you talk; you’re mad.”

“Paul,” burst from the doctor’s lips.

“I won’t ever take any of your old medicines,” cried Paul, threateningly, “and I’ll tell all the boys I know to tell their fathers not to—I will; and they won’t do it if I say not.”

“Paul, remember whom you are speaking to,” said Daisy, while Thurston, holding his tongue between his teeth, vowed that his first act as the child’s brother-in-law would be to shake him soundly—not for the threat but for his conduct toward his sister, and his impertinence generally.

“He’d better remember who he’s holding,” Paul muttered in reply to his sister.

To the relief of all, Horatio was seen rapidly approaching them. “So you’ve got him,” he said, as he met them. “I am glad they are under your protection, doctor.”

“He’s holding on to me,” growled Paul.

“Well I’ll hold on to you a bit now,” grasping his collar on the other side.

“Were you alone long, Daisy?”

“No; the doctor came almost directly; before it was near dark.”

“I consider myself very fortunate in arriving just at that time,” said the doctor.

“I’m very glad you did. I came the moment I got home. Mother and the girls were very much worried about Daisy. Herbert should have come with her, or sent for me.”

Thurston thanked the kind fortune that had kept Herbert at home, and prevented their sending for Horatio, though he did not want Daisy to take any more such dangerous excursions in the future. “Your sister was not long alone,” he said, simply.

“Yes, but—you young rascal!” The latter was addressed to Paul, who, having been transferred from Thurston’s strong hold to Horatio, had managed to free himself, and was running back at full speed. Horatio started after him. “Go on,” he shouted back; for Thurston and Daisy stood waiting. “I’ll have him in a moment.”

“Don’t be troubled, Daisy,” Thurston said as they walked on, looking down on her anxious face.

“He is my brother,” she said, simply.

“But he is young yet, and will grow better as he grows older.”

“Age does not reform sinners. As the child is so

the man will be. These seeds of wickedness sown so early cannot fail to bring forth bad fruit."

"We trust that they will be plowed up before they take root."

"But there will be the deep furrows left in his young heart."

"Which we will leave God to heal. It is all in His hands. You are catching cold," he added, as Daisy shivered.

"No ; I am not, and I am getting well."

"You are not getting well, and will not until you take that trip to the South which I advised."

"Then I shall never be well ; for it is settled that I cannot go South."

"It is settled that you can. I am going in the autumn, and I shall take my wife."

"Your wife !" she echoed, forgetting for a moment the new relation.

"My wife," he repeated. "We will spend a few months there on our wedding trip," taking it all in his own hands, as it is the fashion of men to do. "Now, is it impossible."

"Not impossible—but so soon ?"

"So soon ! It is three long months yet. It is so long, Daisy mine,—so long before you are a part of myself—"

He was interrupted by Horatio's coming, with Paul again a captive. "Hold on to him on the other side," he cried breathlessly. "You won't get off again, my fine boy."

“I will if I want to,” said Paul, largely. “You couldn’t have caught me this time if I hadn’t let you.”

“I’m glad you let me then,” answered Horatio.

The family were anxiously waiting for them on the rectory porch. Mr. Brentwell had returned, and he came down the path to meet them. He greeted the doctor quietly. “And this is my son,” he said sadly, releasing Paul from his captors, and leading him to the house. “Where did you find him, Daisy?”

Daisy gave the assembled family an account of her evening adventures—save one scene! Christie wept: Lestie rebuked. They all, the doctor included, entered the house to hold a council, where they should determine what course they should pursue to reform Paul.

“He must be hungry,” said Mrs. Brentwell, hastening to the cupboard: “he shall have something to eat.”

“I don’t think he needs any supper to-night, Martha,” said Mr. Brentwell.

“I’m hungry,” cried Paul from the lounge, where he had thrown himself.

“If he were my boy,” said Horatio, “he would be locked up for a week, and fed on bread and water.”

“I ain’t your boy,” from the depths of the pillow.

“I don’t know,” said Mr. Brentwell, despairingly.

“He ought to be sent to bed,” said Horatio.

“Not without his supper,” said Mrs. Brentwell, bringing butter and biscuits from the cupboard. “Here, dear, sit up.” Paul obeyed with wonderful alacrity.

“Mother’s poor boy,” she murmured smoothing his sunny hair.

“I haven’t been doing nothing,” he said, with his mouth full. It did not take him long to swallow the slight repast, and then he was sent to bed.

“I have done everything,” said Mr. Brentwell, as the door closed after him, “and everything has failed. Martha, I believe we’ve been too lenient.”

“Oh, George, that could not be! Kindness is the only thing that has any lasting influence over children.”

“Kindness! he has had kindness all his life. It is time we turned over a new leaf, and tried a little severity. To-morrow, Herbert, you may go to his school and get his books: and tell the teacher that he is not coming any more. I shall instruct him myself for the present. And, wife, he must never be allowed in the street alone. A strict watch must always be kept over him.”

“Oh, George!”

“It is the only course,” the clergyman said. Thurston, feeling that he had no settled right as yet to enter into the family conference, and fearing that he intruded, rose to take his leave. Mrs. Brentwell urged him to remain, and Daisy looked entreatingly up to him. But he resisted both these outward appeals, and the inward appeals of his own inclination, and hastened away. “Can you give me an hour to-morrow?” he said to Mr. Brentwell, as they shook hands, “I wish to see you on a matter of some importance.” Mr. Brentwell, thinking of church doctrines, and the doctor’s possible reforma-

tion, appointed an hour—as indifferently as if Daisy had not sat there, trembling and blushing, and Thurston himself been thankful when he was out in the open air.

“What does he want with father, Daisy?” Lestie asked the moment the door closed after him. The family eyes bore down upon the flushed cheeks, but no one dreamt of the truth.

“He did not tell me,” Daisy said simply.

“Perhaps,” said Christie, “he is going to be married and wants father to perform the ceremony.”

“I hope so,” said Lestie, “and that he’ll give a large fee.” No one replied to her, or encouraged her hopes. Mrs. Brentwell left the room to go softly up stairs to her truant boy: Mr. Brentwell went into his study, whither Daisy followed him almost immediately. He sat by an open window, thinking only of his youngest child; and he looked almost annoyed as she entered.

“I will not stay long, father,” she said, “but there is something I must say to you.”

“Sit down, child. Is there any thing new about Paul? my poor boy!”

“No,” she said, seating herself on a stool at his feet: “it is only about myself—myself and some one else.”

“Has the night air given you a fresh cold?”

“No. I am not hoarse.”

“I think you are. Then what have you to say?”

“Oh, father!” Why did he not know without waiting for her to tell him? After what the doctor had said, it was strange he did not; but no; there he sat, think-

ing only of Paul, and she must go on without aid. "You remember," she said, beginning at the very beginning, "that I told you that I had to wait for Paul some time."

"Yes, yes. I'm afraid that he doesn't feel much repentance to-night. Where had they been? Which direction did the boat come from?"

"I didn't notice."

"Didn't notice! Why what were you thinking about?"

"That is what I want to tell you, father—only listen. I was alone and it was growing dark—"

"You ought not to have gone alone; you never could have brought the child home."

"Perhaps not, but—"

"And he would have been with his evil companions yet. Poor boy! poor boy! Why wasn't Horatio sent for?"

"I don't know indeed. We thought I could bring him—and I did."

"You could not have brought him if the doctor had not been there. Now run away to bed."

"No, father; I have something to tell you—you must know it to-night."

"Of Paul?"

"No; myself this time."

"Oh, yes! so you said."

"I went alone—"

"Very foolishly."

"But I did. Paul was not in the hut, and I waited there, thinking he must be on the river—"

“ You *thought* so. Didn’t you know it ? ” he said.
“ Did you wait long ? ”

“ I really—I really—why father, I didn’t notice the length of time—it might have been long—may be it was short—I can’t tell indeed.”

“ Child, is this the love you have for your brother ? ”

“ Oh, father, I forgot Paul ! ”

“ Forgot him ! ”

“ Yes, I did : though it was so wrong—O let me tell you ! ”

“ You are wearing my patience out, waiting to hear you. What is it ? Was Paul the worst of them all ? ”

“ It is not of Paul. I was alone—”

“ There ! I know that.”

“ Well, I wanted to tell you that *he* came.

“ He ! who ? ”

“ The doctor.”

“ I wish he was here now ; you have a fever.”

“ He came, and I was so intent watching for Paul that I did not see him—”

“ That was right. I am glad you remembered him then, if you forgot him afterwards.”

“ I didn’t hear him, and then you know—I cannot tell how it happened ! ”

“ Does your head ache ? ”

“ O my head will never ache again. Do listen.”

“ Go to bed and I will send for the doctor.”

“ He will be here to-morrow to see you.”

“ Well, he shall come to-night to see you.”

“May be I do talk a little incoherently, but joy has done it.”

“Joy ! joy for what ? Your brother’s sins ?”

“Oh, I love him !” cried Daisy, in desperation, taking a new start.

“I have no doubt of it : he is your brother.”

“And he loves me,” gathering courage by the thought. “He does, father, and he asked me to be his wife.”

“His wife ! Whose wife ?”

“The doctor’s ?”

“Has doctor St. James asked you to marry him ?” gravely.

“Yes, father, what will you answer him to-morrow ?”

“This is very sudden : I must think of it, and talk it over with your mother. Now go to bed. Kiss me good night. Have you anything more to say about Paul ?”

“No more. Here is mother now,” as Mrs. Brentwell entered the study.

Kissing her parents good night, she ran off to find Horatio, to whom the glad tidings must speedily be told.

CHAPTER XXIII.

“ So the truth’s out.”

IN a remarkably short time all Newfield was discussing the engagement : all Newfield was commenting upon the doctor’s diamond ring on Daisy’s finger. That it was a good fit, they could not deny—indeed they were quite unanimous in that opinion ; as unanimous, in fact, as if there had been a town meeting called, and the case well argued. Of course no one was surprised that the ring was there. Every one knew that it was going on, and had known it all along. Some, who think no evil, except when the evil is too plain to be hidden, thought that it was the unavoidable consequence of her running after him. Others thought that a physician’s wife should be strong and healthy, and that Daisy was too delicate. Others declared that it was a sin for an Episcopalian and a Presbyterian to marry. Many knew that the engagement would soon be broken ; and only those who had always known of his engagement to a young lady in the city were silent.

Mrs. Morris had invited a few friends to tea, ostensibly in honor of her newly married daughter, who, with her husband, was spending a few days at home, but in reality that the engagement might be fully dis-

cussed, and that a few select friends might have an opportunity of making their most private thoughts on the subject publicly known. Mrs. Pepper, Miss Wells, Mrs. Barker and Miss Amelia were the invited guests. Miss Amelia declined the invitation, as she could not neglect her boarders.

Mrs. Pepper and Miss Crissy were already there, seated in the comfortable sitting-room, industriously plying the needle, when the widow arrived.

“Well, Mis’ Barker,” was Mrs. Morris’s greeting, “so you’re here at last. I was just saying that I guessed that you wasn’t coming: you’re mostly so punctual. Where’s Miss ’Melie?”

“’Melie couldn’t leave home on account of the doctor and Silas. She’d have to stay and get their tea—come what would.”

“I believe in a person’s doing their duty,” said Mrs. Pepper. “So Miss ’Melie ain’t far wrong there.”

“’Melie she’s devoted to the doctor,” said Mrs. Barker.

“I suppose that the doctor is very happy these days,” remarked Mrs. Maria West, remembering her own betrothal days.

“He don’t show it, if he is,” said the widow.

“Laws, John used to be so tickled all the time that every body noticed it.”

Mrs. Pepper nodded her head vigorously. “That tells the whole story,” she said. “When I first consented to marry my man, he didn’t know whether he

stood on his head or his heels. That tells the whole story, and it agrees pretty well with what Paul told me about it. He saw the whole thing."

"What did he tell you?" cried Miss Wells eagerly.

"If you'll never say a word, or let on I told you—"

"Oh, never, never!" cried the ladies in a chorus.

"Paul's an awful bad boy," Mrs. Pepper went on, "and there's no telling how much harm he'd do, so I forbid my boys going with him. Still I felt kind o' sorry for him, considering that he's going right to ruin, and I made up my mind to talk to him about his evil ways the first chance I got. Well I got the chance the other day. I was going up by the house, and there was Paul leaning over the gate all alone, and I stopped. I'd heard that they don't let him go into the street alone any more, so I says, just to get the subject started: 'Why ain't you out playing with the boys?' That set him agoing. He laid the whole blame on Daisy and the doctor. 'If it hadn't been for me,' says he, 'she wouldn't never have got him. She was running after me when she ketched him.' I thought if I got him to talking to me right freely, I could do him some good, and so I asked him what he meant, and he told me all about it. It seems that Paul had gone off somewheres—to Sam's, most likely—and staid until it was dark. Daisy, she saw the doctor go by, and she took it into her head to go after Paul—all alone, mind you, and at night: and there was Horatio or Herbert, or any of them, who might have gone for him. She calculated the thing just

so as to meet the doctor, when he was coming back. There she was, alone in the dark, and what could he do, poor man, but ask her to marry him ?”

“ Why, of course,” said the widow, “ he wasn’t so much to blame.”

“ But to think of her accepting him the very first time he offered himself !” cried Miss Crissy, greatly horrified.

“ Oh my stars !” cried the coquettish Martha, “ I’d like to see the man I’d take up at his first offer.”

“ Well, I can say this much,” said the widow ; “ the doctor ain’t no-wise stuck up about it : he’s more like down in the mouth.”

“ Do you think he’s sorry ?” asked Mrs. West.

“ You don’t say so !” cried Miss Crissy.

“ I told you so,” said Mrs. Pepper, nodding her head again. “ I told you so.”

“ I didn’t say he was sorry,” said Mrs. Barker ; “ I said he wasn’t stuck up about it ; or if he is, he keeps it to himself.”

“ We understand,” said Miss Crissy.

It would have come out in a few moments more that the doctor was going into a slow decline for grief of his bonds, that he had tried to break the engagement, and that Daisy had refused to let him, and many other fearful things which the doctor had tried to conceal, if the conversation had not been interrupted by the coming of John West. He entered the sitting room with his coat off and hat on, and seated himself on a low chair by

Maria. He was then introduced to the ladies, whom he greeted with a stiff nod of his head.

“Well, old woman,” he said to his wife, “how are you getting on?”

“Now, John, don’t be calling me ‘old woman.’”

John burst into a loud laugh.

“What else be you? You see,” addressing the ladies, “my old woman is tender on the subject of her age.”

“As if she was old;” said Martha. “You ought to be ashamed of yourself.”

“It’s the way,” he said, with a great wink of his eye. “Get these girls married once.”

“Then what?” demanded Martha. “I don’t believe the doctor’ll talk that way when he’s married.”

“You’ll find out what he’ll do, when he’s tied up.”

“*When* he’s tied up,” significantly observed Mrs. Pepper.

“So the minister’s daughter’s got a beau,” said Mr. West. “You had a beau once, didn’t you, old woman? and you kep’ tight onto him until you got him into harness.”

“I’d like to have a man talk like that to me,” said Martha, contemptuously.

“Of course you would,” returned John, resting his feet on a neighboring table. “Of course you would: what girl wouldn’t!”

“Oh my stars, Maria! I’d never have married him.”

“That’s a good one. Ha! ha! Why wasn’t you so

free with your advice before the parson tied the knot?"

"You're awful, John West!"

"I went to the parson," John continued, "and I says, 'Maria'll raise the town if I don't marry her; and as long as I got to be yoked, I want you to do the yokin'. 'I'll be hanged!' says the parson, 'if it don't take them women folks to hook a fellow. There's Mis' Brentwell—'"

"I don't believe one word of it," interrupted Martha.

"What's the use of my setting here, wasting my breath on you, if you don't believe a word I say? Mother Morris, ain't it most eatin' time?"

"I think it is, John. The kettle's been boiled this half hour. Martha, pull out the big table and set it." Maria and Martha set the table together. The supper was soon ready, and the ladies gathered around.

Before that meal was over, it was finally settled that although Daisy had succeeded in entrapping the doctor, she would not be able to keep him long.

CHAPTER XXIV.

“And slowly was my mother brought
To yield consent to my desire ;
She wished me happy, but she thought
I might have looked a little higher.”

—TENNYSON.

ON the day of Mrs. Morris' tea party Mrs. St. James sat alone in her parlor, reading the city papers. It was two weeks since she had received a letter from Thurston, and she was afraid that some accident had happened to him. To make certain that this was or was not the truth, she was reading the papers thoroughly. It was Thurston's habit to write home twice a week, so there was some cause for anxiety.

There came a violent ringing at the door. She threw down the paper she held, and listened eagerly. “The postman surely,” she said, as the street door opened. Then she heard a young voice inquiring for her, and her heart sank again.

The parlor door opened, and a tall, elegantly attired young lady entered.

“Dear Mrs. St. James,” she said, hastening to embrace her. “How glad I am to see you ! How anxious you are looking !”

“I am glad to see you, dear. I am still anxious

about Thurston ; I have not heard from him yet. Has Wolcott a letter ? or you ?”

“I ! oh no !” with a short laugh, seating herself. “He rarely writes to me nowadays. He has forgotten me completely.”

“Oh no ; that is not possible. Has Wolcott received a letter ?”

“I don’t think that he has.”

“This silence is unaccountable. I have been looking over these papers, thinking that if there had been an accident I should see an account of it there.”

“An accident ! Put them away, Mrs. St. James, do. You are giving yourself needless anxiety. Thurston is well, or you would have heard of it. Perhaps,” she added, with a short laugh, “he has met some charming country lass, who has so completely bewitched him that he has forgotten you.”

“That is impossible. No woman could make him forget his mother. No ; Abby, he is sick or dead.”

“It may be that he is coming home soon.”

“That would not prevent his writing—even if he intended a surprise. No ; there is something the matter, and if we don’t hear from him by to-morrow, I think, Abby, I will go to Newfield to see if he is dead or alive. Mayne will accompany me.”

Miss Emerson left her chair for the ottoman at Mrs. St. James’ feet. “And I,” she said, softly.

“You, Abby !”

“Yes, I—that is if he will not think it bold.”

“If he is alive, you mean. No, he will never think that of you. Ah, here is Wolcott,” as a gentleman entered the room.

“Good afternoon, mother,” he said, bending to kiss her. “Ah, Abby! you here?”

“Have you heard from Thurston, Wolcott?” asked the mother.

“From Thurston!” searching through his pockets. “Why, where’s that gone? Yes, I have a letter if I could only find it. Ah! here it is. Read it aloud: I want to hear what he has to say for himself.”

“Where are my glasses?” she cried, trembling with joy. “I had them a moment ago. I am so thankful, Wolcott, that it has come.”

“So am I. Don’t mind your glasses. I’ll read it.”

He tore it open, and glanced hastily over it. “What is this?” he cried. “Confound him!”

“What is the matter?” cried Abby.

“What has he done?” asked Mrs. St. James.

“What has he done! In plain English he has made a fool of himself. We might have known it. Still I used to think Thurston had sense.”

“Oh! what is it?” Mrs. St. James took the letter in her own hand, but the glasses were still missing. “Read it, Abby,” she said.

“No,” said Wolcott, “if it must be read, I will read it.”

“Darling mother,” it began, “forgive this long neglect. I know it has caused you great anxiety, and I

do not forgive myself for it. I am perfectly well, as I have been ever since I came to Newfield. I am very busy, but that is not my excuse for not writing. My excuse ! I must confess to you and receive pardon. Where shall I begin ? Dear mother, you first taught me the lessons of love, and I learned them well.

“When I came to this village I was alone and felt alone, but now that is over : I love and am loved by one of the purest and loveliest women on earth. There ! I have told you, mother, why I could not write before—”

Wolcott paused.

“Read on,” whispered Abby.

“What does he mean ?” said Mrs. St. James.

“I told you what he means : he has made a fool of himself,” said Wolcott in no gentle tone.

“Read on,” whispered Abby again.

“The woman I have learned to love is the oldest daughter of the Rev. Mr. Brentwell, the Episcopal clergyman in this place. We are engaged and hope to be married in the autumn. There, that is all. I have delayed writing, foolishly fearing that it might pain you. But knowing so well that what gives your children happiness adds to your own, I cast aside the fear and write. Send me your blessing, mother, and your love to Daisy, my little Daisy. Her right name is Deborah ; and she is truly worthy of the name.

“Your loving son,

“THURSTON.”

There was a silence. Wolcott leaned against the marble mantel-piece, frowning, and wishing to himself that "Daisy, my little Daisy" was in the "Eastern Penitentiary."

Abby sat motionless, not realizing it all, yet way down in her heart firmly resolving that the next time she was won the wooing would be done by the man himself and not by his family. She loved Thurston, but not deeply. She was too intensely selfish to love any one to a great extent, but her pride was wounded, and she thought, as we often do, that it was her heart.

"Well, mother," said Wolcott, at length, "what do you think of your boy now? Hang that 'Daisy,' or whatever he calls her—some poor upstart who has entangled him."

"Don't, don't, Wolcott," said Mrs. St. James.

"I'll write to him this day, and give him a piece of my mind. I shall let him know that he can't bring low creatures into our family."

"You will not do that ; for my sake."

"What right has he to do such a thing without consulting us?"

"The rights of a man," said Mrs. St. James, trying to believe her own words.

"You seem pleased," impatiently.

"I am not pleased ; she is not one whom I would have him marry. I had rather that he looked in another direction ; but I don't know her and may love her dearly when I do. At least, I shall always remember that she

is my son's wife. Wolcott," she added, "You will allow me to communicate this to your father."

"I certainly shall never mention the subject to him. There is Mayne talking in the entry. Mayne," he called. A tall light haired young man entered.

"I heard there was a letter from Thurston," he said, when the greetings were over, "and I came to hear what he had to say. Why do you all look so grave? has anything happened?"

"Read that," cried Wolcott, giving him the letter.

"I am glad of that," Mayne said, quietly, when he had read it. "When you write, mother, tell him that I shall be up next week, if the babies are willing."

"Come, Abby," said Wolcott, stiffly. "Good-bye, mother. On second thought, I shall not write to Thurston; but in the future, I shall let him entirely alone. I am done with him."

"Dear Wolcott," entreatingly.

"He deserves it."

"Deserves it for what?" said Mayne. "You married whom you pleased, and so did I."

"We didn't disgrace the family," was Wolcott's reply, as he left the room. Miss Emerson quietly took leave of Mrs. St. James and, sweeping almost scornfully past Mayne, followed Wolcott from the house.

"Mayne," Mrs. St. James said, as the street door closed after them—"Mayne, has Thurston done right by Abby?"

"Yes, mother, he has. Wolcott has tried to force

her upon him, and you have all been anxious for him to marry her ; but he has never intended to give her any encouragement. I can answer for him there. He told me once, however, that if he never met any one he liked better, he supposed he would marry her for your sakes—that is all. He has met some one whom he likes better, you see. When you write him, tell him I will be up next week, babies or no babies.”

“When she wrote him.” How eagerly Thurston watched for the letter. At last it came.

“MY DARLING SON,

“Your long silence caused us great anxiety ; we had feared everything, but were not quite prepared for the intelligence you had to communicate.” (Here Mrs. St. James made a very long pause in writing, but Thurston saw no break, and read on.) “I send you my blessing, praying for your happiness, dear boy, and that she may prove herself worthy of your love. Yes, give her my love. Mayne desires me to say that he will be in Newfield next week. To-morrow I will write you a long letter. But no more now.

“Dear Thurston, darling son, is your conscience clear where Abby Emerson is concerned ?

“Your loving mother,

“DEBORAH ST. JAMES.”

“Yes,” said Thurston emphatically, “it is.”

CHAPTER XXV.

MISS NETTIE was dead. All Newfield rang with the news ; Newfield hearts donned mourning robes again. She went out of the world one soft June day, when it was the most beautiful. She had been ill but a few days. Thurston, Horatio and Daisy were with her when she died. They were young ; and in the fresh bloom of life could not understand the readiness, the willingness with which she gave up that life. The earth was so fair to them ; there was so much to live for ; so many happy days in the future. Thurston and Daisy looked forward to their life of love as one dream, where no care could enter, where there would be no tears, and all smiles ; Horatio had plans of a glorious career ; there was a world to be conquered, and they thought of Death as of an unwelcome messenger, who would call them away from this happiness they had planned for themselves.

Mother Wade again assumed charge of the house, and remained until after the funeral and disposal of the furniture. The funeral services were held in the church, and she was laid to rest by her well-beloved brother—and the Doreanns were gone from Newfield. Newfield without one of the family ! How would it

seem? Only the oldest remembered the day when the doctor first moved there. One by one that little family had gone; Mrs. Doreann, the doctor, and now Nettie. "I am the last leaf," she would say—"the last leaf upon the tree. Thus far I have withstood the autumn winds, but the wintry blast will shortly come and bear me away."

To her friends she bequeathed the few remaining articles of a once gay wardrobe. There were three silk dresses for the rector's daughters; a blue, a black and a brown, and to determine how these should be distributed to advantage and satisfaction the girls held a council.

Lestie, as chairman, was seated on the floor with the dresses spread around her. Daisy, in her mother's chair, slowly rocked as she surveyed them. Christie knelt by Daisy, looking on the blue silk with longing eyes—just as Lestie did.

"You both know," was Lestie's opening address to the meeting, "that Daisy can't wear blue."

"Of course not," said Christie.

"She looks like a fright in it," Lestie went on "and the brown will make her a good travelling dress."

"I can't afford to travel in silk yet," said Daisy, who preferred the black: "my first one, at any rate."

"Your first! I wouldn't own it. Do you want the black one then?"

"Which do you want?"

“You know you can’t wear blue.”

“I know, but Christie can.”

“Never mind me. I was thinking, Lestie, that it would be better if we gave two of them to Daisy toward her outfit—”

“She can’t have silk dresses and get married and everything,” cried Lestie.

“No, indeed,” said Daisy, “I must take but one. When I’m married I shall have a great many more fine dresses than either of you will.”

“To be sure,” said Lestie.

“It seems,” said Christie, “as though we ought not to enjoy these dresses so much when Miss Nettie is dead.”

“Well, it’s to be hoped that she’s enjoying herself too,” returned Lestie. “Now, which do you want? Do, one of you, say. Christie, do you want the black?”

“Don’t you?” looking at the blue.

“No : I don’t,” decidedly.

“Let’s draw lots,” said Daisy.

“No,” said Lestie, who felt certain that she would never be so fortunate as to draw the blue silk—“no : that would be wicked, and you know it. I am surprised to hear you talk so. Christie, this brown will be real becoming to you, and the black will suit Daisy.”

“And which will you take?” asked Daisy.

“Oh, the blue I suppose !” indifferently.

“We’ll decide then,” said Christie suddenly, “that the blue silk shall be Lestie’s.”

There was a short pause, while Lestie looked at the black, wondering if ever in future years she would regret that she had chosen the blue ; but Christie had made the decision, and she would have her to blame.

“The brown shall be mine,” said Daisy, at length.

“No : you shall have the black,” said Christie.

“I don’t want it,” gathering up the brown. “See how wide this skirt is. I do believe it is the widest of them all.”

“Oh, so it is !” said Lestie, regretfully : “but then,” resignedly, “you are the oldest and ought to have the best.”

“The best ! it’s the very worst,” cried Christie, holding out the skirt. “It’s torn in this breadth, and faded in ever so many places. I don’t believe I’ll take the black, Daisy.”

“I believe you will.”

Lestie got up from the floor, and tried the effect of the blue before the glass.

“There’s the doctor,” cried Christie, looking out of the window, “coming up the walk with such a handsome man. Do look, Daisy.”

Daisy gave one hurried glance at the handsome stranger, and went with the dresses into her mother’s bedroom. She stopped a moment to smooth her curls before the glass, and to quiet her beating heart.

Thurston had entered, when she returned to the sitting-room, and was introducing the stranger as his brother. Mr. St. James scarcely waited for a formal

introduction to Daisy : he took both her hands in his, as he said, "I am glad to meet you, Miss Brentwell. I had intended visiting Newfield a long time ago, and delayed it, but when Thurston wrote to us of you, I said I must come immediately, and here I am."

"Welcome to Newfield," Daisy said, smiling.

"Thank you. Newfield looks like a pleasant place, but still it is not the Eden that mother has pictured it to herself and us."

"Mother must see it," said Thurston, as they took chairs. "Is Horatio at home?"

"He has gone for his books," answered Daisy.

"I want my brother to make his acquaintance."

"He will be back soon, I think ; for he has been gone a long time."

"It is really remarkable what progress he makes in his studies," Thurston went on, with some pride of his future brother-in-law.

"I don't wonder at his progress," said Christie ; "for his whole heart is wrapt up in his studies ; he is never without a book."

"Yes," added Lestie, laughing, "and he is always perscribing for us if we are the least sick."

"He will make a mark in the world," Thurston said to his brother.

"From what his sister said of him, I should think he would. A man's heart must be 'wrapt up,' in his work to succeed, and where it is 'wrapt up,' he will succeed. No half way work ever amounts to anything. It

must be study, work, plod through life, genius or no genius, and then a man will make himself a name. Has he chosen the medical profession ?”

“Yes,” answered Daisy. “He is studying with Thurston.”

“Horatio has genius,” said the doctor, in reply to his brother’s remarks, “or I should not have such hopes of his becoming a great man. I am not a believer in that theory that men can create unto themselves a genius.”

“I am,” said Mr. St. James ; “I am a firm believer in it. Men can make themselves what they will by study. The great genius we hear so much of is, in fact, only an inordinate love of study, and a determination to overcome all the difficulties that may lie in the way of success. A man by great industry and perseverance accomplishes an incredible amount of work ; he amasses great learning, and becomes noted—men say he has genius.”

“You cannot deny that there is a great difference in intellects,” said Thurston ; “we see that in the unlearned masses.”

“I acknowledge that : there are few minds like Sir Isaac Newton’s, but it is well known that he attributed his great inventions to this constant reflection upon them. They were always before his mind.”

“Oh, well,” said Lestie, going back to the original subject, “Horatio is talented : he always was, and he may have an intellect like Sir Isaac Newton’s.”

“It is not impossible,” said Mr. St. James. “Many a man has had an intellect, not only equal, but superior to Newton’s, and would have made a greater man if he had not neglected to improve it. He may have felt the power within him, but there being no royal road to learning, and he, not having resolution or perseverance to plod in the old one, remained where he was. All of which goes to prove my statement that it is not so much genius but plodding which makes the man.”

“Another discussion on the carpet,” said Mr. Brentwell, coming in at that moment. “Who is getting the best of it?” he said, when he had been introduced to Mr. St. James.

“I think my brother is,” said Thurston. “He generally gets the best of every discussion: he has a wonderful gift of speech. I begin to think, Mayne, that you would have made a first class extempore speaker.”

“You think I have a *genius* for it, do you?” he said, laughing. “Well, if I have, I have certainly neglected to improve it, and some man with no genius at all will work and study and then astound the world with his eloquence, and I shall never be heard of, because I lack ambition and application.”

“Here is Horatio with the books,” Lestie cried, a half an hour later, running out to meet him. “Horatio at last.” She was followed by Thurston and Daisy, while Christie went up stairs to see if everything was in readiness to receive them. The book-case was to be set

up in Horatio's room. Such a merry time as they did have ! The children carried the books up, while Horatio and the doctor arranged them on the shelves. Mrs. Brentwell stood by, commenting and approving. Mr. Brentwell and Mr. St. James came up after a while, and pronounced the library a fine one. Lestie lamented that there were no novels ; Paul regretted the absence of Indian adventures ; Christie looked in vain for poems, and Daisy found the only non-medical work—a cook book. So Horatio was monarch of all the books he surveyed.

The doctor and Mayne departed soon after. Mr. St. James had not yet been presented to Mrs. Barker and Miss Amelia. They found the ladies anxiously awaiting them. There had been an accident down the road, and a man nearly killed, and the doctor was wanted immediately. He introduced his brother and hastened off, leaving him to the mercy of the widow's tongue. She was very well pleased with this arrangement, and began her attack without loss of time.

“It's pretty good of you, I take it, to come up from Philadelphia to see your brother.”

“I take it that we have quite neglected him,” Mayne returned, “knowing how impossible it is for him to leave the place for any length of time.”

“There hav'n't any of you visited Newfield before, that is true. He must have felt riled.”

“Oh, no ; he understands what time business men have to run around. However, one of us should have been up before.”

"How do you like Newfield?" ventured Miss Amelia.

"Very well. I should like to spend some time in it."

"Then you ain't going to stay long?" said the widow.

"That is impossible."

"I always meant to ask the doctor if he'd heard where the Brightons moved to. They went to Philadelphia to live. Perhaps you know."

"Brighton! Alexander Brighton?"

"Tom Brighton."

"I know a gentleman by the name of Alexander Brighton, but not Tom."

"Maybe his cousin. Tom's a nice fellow. You might ask Alexander about him. He was terrible anxious to marry 'Melie one spell."

"There, Mary, don't tell that. You know I never thought he was in earnest."

"In earnest! When a man tags a girl around like he did you, he's in earnest."

"Well, I've read that men make love to girls to break their hearts, so I haven't any faith left," Miss Amelia said.

"And so refused this well-meaning honest man," said Mayne, "because some one at some time has written a lie about men generally. It is too bad, Miss Barker, that you cannot undo that piece of work, and marry the victim."

"Now there's the doctor," said Mrs. Barker, "any one can see that he's in earnest. Did you see Daisy?"

“We called there this afternoon.”

“Do you like her?”

“Very much. She will make a good wife.”

“Yes, I’ve told him that a hundred times. But,” she added, “*she’s got one fault.*”

“One! That’s quite a relief. The majority of women have a million. Even my wife has two or three. But to have only one is really comforting. I must congratulate the doctor again.”

“She has one fault,” repeated the widow, in surprise.

“I’m really glad that she has one; for if she had none, she would be too pure for this earth.”

He nodded wisely, and the widow stared blankly.

“I didn’t mean anything against her,” she said, at length. “There ain’t a nicer girl in Newfield than Daisy Brentwell, but we all have our faults.”

“By the million,” rejoined Mayne, “and that is the reason that I rejoice that she has but one.”

“I hope you won’t say anything to the doctor about it,” said the widow, still ignorant of his meaning.

“Oh, no; it wouldn’t be necessary; he’s found out before this that she is almost faultless.”

“Here’s Silas,” said the widow, with a sigh of relief.

“Your son, Mrs. Barker?”

“Oh, no; one of the boarders. Silas, this is Mr. St. James, the doctor’s brother. He’s awful bashful,” she added, indefinitely. Thanks to the doctor’s training and example, Silas had overcome a great deal of his former

bashfulness, and greeted Mr. St. James with such self-possession and ease that that gentleman began to think the widow must have meant that he was bashful himself.

Silas remained in the sitting-room at Mrs. Barker's invitation, and by the time Thurston returned had become quite well acquainted with Mayne. Supper was announced immediately on the doctor's entrance.

As they seated themselves at the table, a carriage drove up to the gate, and a tall lady in mourning alighted, followed by a servant maid.

"Who can that be?" cried the widow.

"It's Jessie, Mary," said Miss Amelia. "Don't you know your own daughter?"

CHAPTER XXVI.

“Your face hath got five hundred pounds a year ;
Yet sell your face for five pence, and 'tis dear.”

—KING JOHN.

MRS. JESSIE SCOTT was a beautiful, soulless woman. Byron Scott had married her for that beauty, and a fancied love. She had married him for his wealth and to free herself from Newfield. He had taken her, an ignorant, poorly-dressed bride, to his high-born mother and sisters, to remodel. They were noble-hearted women, and Byron never knew the sacrifice it cost them to receive her as his wife. They did their best for her, and, after a short rigorous training, the best proved to be a great deal—outwardly—but no more. They could clothe her in fine apparel, but they could not put a soul in the beautiful image ; they taught her to be a lady, but they could not make her a woman.

The few years of her married life had been unhappy ; death was a release to Mr. Scott, and certainly she was glad to regain her freedom. She was rich now, and a lady, and some day she would marry some one who would be every way worthy of her, she thought ; Byron certainly was not. She had come to Newfield to spend the first period of mourning. While etiquette forbade her going into society, she would be a dutiful daughter, and remain with her mother.

Mrs. Scott embraced Mrs. Barker and Miss Amelia, with great feeling, and was presented to the gentlemen. Silas was a boy, and she entirely overlooked him ; the doctor was fine looking, but too quiet and dignified ; Mayne she admired, and the few remarks she made were addressed to him. She lingered a moment in the dining-room, and then followed her mother to the chamber prepared for her.

“The old house does begin to look respectable, mother,” she said, as they entered the room.

“It is elegant,” said Mrs. Barker. “Everybody in Newfield is going wild over it.”

“I hope ‘everybody in Newfield’ won’t be calling on me,” said Mrs. Scott, ungraciously. “I suppose they’ve all been over the house to their heart’s content.”

“A few have been to look at it,” said Mrs. Barker, quietly, remembering the invitations she had scattered so freely abroad.

“They’ve seen all they will see. I shall only receive calls from the Van Pikes and Brentwells. Are any of the Brentwell children grown up ?”

“Daisy is.”

“Daisy ! that sickly little spit-fire ?”

“She’s a fine young lady now, and engaged to the doctor.”

“The doctor ! what doctor ?”

“Dr. St. James.”

“The brother of that elegant man ? Well, he isn’t much.”

“Yes, he is, Jessie. He is always quiet, and to-night he is worried about a patient, who is dying.”

“He doesn’t begin with his brother. I wish he boarded here instead of the doctor.”

“With his wife and three children! we wouldn’t have any room left for ourselves.”

“He isn’t married!” cried Mrs. Scott. “How do you know he is?”

“The doctor said so. And he was talking about one of the children who had been sick, and I asked how many he had, and he said three.”

“The idea! and the other one is engaged?”

“Yes; to Daisy Brentwell.”

“How did she ever get him?”

“That’s more’n anybody but Daisy knows. They say the doctor didn’t know, till he was there.”

Then followed a new version of Mrs. Pepper’s account.

“Poor man,” Mrs. Scott said, when it was finished. “What a way some girls do have of getting around men.”

“I never did think Daisy would be guilty of such actions.”

“She’s a hoydenish country girl, and what else could you expect? Is the doctor always so dignified?”

“Yes; he’s very dignified, but everybody likes him.”

“Well, well,” Mrs. Scott said, as her mother left the room. “I didn’t think that *he* was married.”

There was no lack of topics for conversation down at

the store that night. There was, in fact, so much to be said, that Mr. Green delayed closing for an hour beyond his usual time. Mayne St. James was well discussed. Some thought that he looked like the doctor, and others thought that he did not, and it took some time to settle the question. Mr. Green gave it as his opinion that the St. Jameses, as a family, were a queer set; he was surprised that Mrs. Barker would allow them in the house with her daughter.

Then the *Widow* Scott came upon the carpet. Her manner of entering Newfield was condemned immediately. In a barouche! The expense was calculated, and it was some time before they could all agree on that. The merits of the horses were spiritedly discussed. Some thought that the one with the longest tail was the best trotter, while others upheld the one with a white star on his forehead. Then there were speculations as to the price of the carriage, and its probable age.

Mr. Green, after giving his own opinion, was unusually silent. He was thinking over his little store of neck-ties, and deciding which one he would wear the following Sunday evening when he called for the first time on Mrs. Scott. Long ago—well, what of that? Long agoes are sad things. Sad! they are heart-breaking. Away with memory—only there had been a time when Mr. Green used to think that Jessie Barker could have cooked his beef steaks splendidly, and have done up his shirts to perfection, and perhaps on Saturday night, when the run came, helped in the store. And

Mr. Green had known that some one else thought so, too, until—never mind the rest.

Mr. St. James spent a few days in Newfield, and went home well pleased with all he had seen and heard. His adventures were recited for his mother many times. Miss Emerson, who was generally present, for a moment forgot her aching heart and was interested and amused, but when Daisy was described and talked about, the remembrance of her disappointment and mortification returned with its old force.

There was a great change in the Barker household after Mrs. Scott's arrival. The quiet home that Thurston and Silas had enjoyed was all gone. There were no more friendly talks after tea—talks in which even Silas used to join. No, indeed; and Silas, poor boy, had not dared to open his lips since the dashing widow had returned, and Miss Amelia tried in vain to make him feel at ease again. Mrs. Pepper had a tea-party in honor of Mrs. Scott, but that lady had no desire to attend, and refused the invitation with more decision than politeness; with so much decision and so little politeness, in fact, that Mrs. Pepper, highly indignant, was heard to say that "Jessie Barker was the same old sixpence: she always was a saucy young one, and no one could make a lady of her." All Newfield was snubbed at this refusal to exhibit herself two nights after her arrival, and took it as an insult to the village.

Mrs. Scott had decided to make her first appearance in church, and disregarding all entreaties from her

mother and aunt, and calls from the neighbors, she did so. On the second Sunday after her arrival in the place she swept up the aisle during the singing of the Te Deum, and took her seat in the front pew. Mr. Brentwell preached an impressive sermon that morning from the text, "Grow in grace," which a few old men listened to, while the remainder of the congregation critically and admiringly surveyed the elegant figure in the front seat. Thurston came in during the latter part of the sermon, as he often did, when he had finished his round of visits, and sat down by the door. It was not long before Mrs. Scott knew of his presence; how she knew of it, no man can ever tell, though a woman might be able to solve the mystery. The little while that remained of the service, the widow gave her mind entirely to forming plans, and wisely decided that a man's talent would be wasted in escorting plain-faced Daisy Brentwell next door, while she, a beautiful woman, went unprotected through the quiet streets of Newfield at noonday. Sometime handsome women will learn that beauty is not all a man seeks, but that it is often the last and least. It is something to be thrown in, like sugar in coffee at a restaurant; no more cost, and many are willing to go without it. Vanity will have hard knocks before this is well understood by the sugar of the world. Mrs. Scott was far from understanding it; her pretty face had carried her a great way and it should carry her farther.

The doctor's horse outside pawed and stamped,

impatient to be off. The good man's sermon drew to a close : the ascription was over, the prayers said, the benediction pronounced, and the congregation, filled with thoughts of Mrs. Scott and her grandeur, quietly departed.

"Oh my stars!" whispered Miss Morris to Daisy as they met at the door, "did you ever see such style? I'm just wild for a veil like that."

"That is the deepest mourning," returned Daisy.

"That's no matter. Ain't that bonnet elegant!"

While Martha was detaining Daisy, Mrs. Scott was improving the opportunity; and it was improved so well that when Daisy turned to speak to her lover, she saw him lifting the widow into his carriage. Thurston drove home, wondering why he had done it, but his companion's busy tongue gave him no time for solving the question. He was angry with her and with himself, and feared that Daisy was troubled.

He was quiet at dinner—so quiet that Miss Amelia asked if he were ill, to which he replied, with more dignity than kindness, that he was not. He refused Mrs. Scott's pressing invitation to spend the afternoon in the parlor, and went into his office, where he shut and locked the door.

"There," he said, "she shall stay out."

CHAPTER XXVII.

“Be every church our home,
And love the battle word !
And saint’s communion—one,
One Lord—one Faith—one birth,
Oh pray to God the Son,
For all His Church on Earth.”

—BISHOP COXE.

HE took paper from his writing-desk, and sat down to write to his mother. Mrs. Pepper would have been horrified at this proceeding, and more horrified still, if she had known the contents of that letter.

“MY DARLING MOTHER :

“I have a great deal to tell you this afternoon that I could much better say than write. I have not forgotten our long Sunday talks, sitting together in the bay-window, when I used to pour my boyish dreams, my hopes and fears into your sympathizing heart, and receive encouragement and aid ; and I want to talk to you this afternoon, in that old bay-window, of Daisy. Mayne has told you about her, and you have learned from him that I was not entirely blinded by love when I made my choice ; that reason stepped in, and was allowed a hearing. I thank you again and again for the manner in which you received the intelligence, for your kind letter to me, and your loving message to Daisy ; but I fear,

dear mother, that the next surprising thing I must tell will not be as well received. I have decided to abjure the old faith, and become a communicant of the Episcopal Church. If I had not become well convinced of my error, I would not give you this pain ; but after long months of study and close argument with Mr. Brentwell, I *am* convinced that the Episcopal Church is the church our Saviour founded when He was upon earth, that she is especially beloved by Him, and that her forms and ceremonies are His institutions. It is the historic church.

“I hope that you will not think this change is in any way connected with my engagement. I know that many charitable people of Newfield will say that I join St. Paul’s for the sole purpose of winning the rector’s daughter. In my imagination I can hear them saying that Mr. Brentwell would not consent to a union until I promised to become an Episcopalian. I cannot go around the town contradicting this, but I assure you that it is not the truth : Mr. Brentwell is not yet aware of my determination. It is some time since we last conversed on the subject, and he doubtless thinks his arguments were lost upon me. I wish it were possible for me to repeat the discussions to you, but I must be content with a few remarks, and when I see you we will talk it over thoroughly ; for I have a great desire for you to become a church-woman. You are very much prejudiced against the Episcopal Church. One of your objections, I remember, is what you call the heartlessness of Her worship. I have often heard you say, ‘All

form and no feeling.' Mother, you have taught me to love the beautiful because God is All Beautiful. He has sent beauty into this world to draw hearts to Him : He has given everything beauty—why not His service ? Every form of beauty, every dignity is employed in the service of earthly kings, and should not a higher, greater form, a more perfect beauty characterize that of our Heavenly king ? In the service of the Episcopal Church, God is approached with great humility : He is in heaven, and we upon earth. In our intercourse with our fellow creatures, those whom we respect we greet with form ; our whole intercourse is ceremonious, while they who are not our equals are treated with an absence of form. And in the loose, unceremonious service of the denominations, God is worshipped—treated, I should say, as some familiar acquaintance, some careless companion. In every act of the service you condemn as heartless, the worshippers realize the greatness of His glory. Compare the humility and beauty of the Litany with the extempore prayers which you hear every Sunday —prayers which are more like addresses to the Lord, and introductory sermons. They are filled with information of the church and country, and the Lord is advised how to act in reference to them, and in conclusion there is a short catechism. The congregation *listen*. Here the denominations and Romanists agree ; the people in both cases are only listeners. The Romanists must do so because the prayers are said in Latin : the denominations must, because they have no idea what

the prayer is to be, until they hear it. Another great beauty of the Episcopal Church is the clergyman's robe. This pure white garment, emblematic of holiness, well befits a priest serving before the Lord. It is symbolic of the robe of the Saviour's righteousness, put on that the people may see the clergyman before them, not as a sinful man, but as God's messenger. I wish, dear mother, that you would read a few books on this subject. Let me recommend Hobart's Apology! and 'Episcopacy Tested by Scripture,' by Bishop Onderdonk. Let me hear from you soon.

“Your loving son,

“THURSTON.”

“MY DARLING SON,

“At length, I take up my pen to answer your letter. It is three days since I received it, and I have just recovered my senses enough to be able to write to you. I was stunned—yes, stunned by what you wrote, and I have only one reply to make, and that is, that this is the greatest affliction God ever visited upon me. I pray that He may show you the error of your ways, and bring your wandering feet back into the old paths.

“Mayne was pleased with his visit to Newfield. He speaks highly of Daisy, and her brother Horatio. He seems to have taken a great interest in the young man. Abby and I will be in Newfield next week for a short visit. Her health is very poor, and she thinks that a

few weeks in the quiet country will be of benefit to her before the summer at Long Branch.

“Your loving mother,

“DEBORAH ST. JAMES.”

“DEAR THURSTON :

“It is evident that you have fallen among Philistines. Your first disclosure I passed over with silent contempt, but the second is too much ; what the third will be I can form no idea of : you seem to have gone the length of your chain, but the Philistines (the clergyman and his daughter) may not have gone the length of theirs. When you return to your senses and Philadelphia, I will greet you as a brother. Until then you are no more of mine.

“WOLCOTT R. ST. JAMES.”

“DEAR THURSTON :

“I am at home again, and so well pleased with my visit that I shall soon repeat it. I have told my adventures over twenty times (kept count) ; nineteen times they were poured into mother’s ears, and I haven’t a doubt but that she was eaves-dropping at the twentieth recital. I am not surprised that you have become an Episcopalian—though I must say that I regret it.

“I have been thinking a great deal about Horatio since I returned, and have settled upon one thing, that he must go to college, and I think we can arrange it without wounding his pride. When the Medical Uni-

versity opens for the fall term, you will be his brother-in-law, and can very well advance money for his tuition, which I will pay you, without his knowledge. I am sure he will accept it from you. My house shall be his home while he is here. I wish you would arrange this matter with his father, and let me know. I have taken a great interest in him, and will do what I can to help him.

“Affectionately yours,

“MAYNE.”

“DEAR SON :

“I have not time to write ; still, I feel it my duty to drop a line. Mayne reports favorably of Newfield and Miss Brentwell. Accept my best wishes for your happiness. I don't send good wishes, however, for this freak of joining the Episcopalians. Can see no reason for it. Your ancestors lived and died Presbyterians. Are you so much wiser in your generation than they ? Change is hurtful at all times. A rolling stone gathers no moss ; a rolling church gathers no religion. Have you considered the matter well ? If Presbyterianism was not right, I should have found it out before this, and as it is, the Archbishop of Canterbury could not convince me that it is wrong. Your mother has laid in a large supply of theological works, which she studies. How are your money matters ? Drop a line when you want a check.

“Your affectionate father,

“LEWIS St. JAMES.”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THREE rooms ! the large sitting-room and two sleeping rooms—and they were on the second floor where it cost the most.

“ You needn’t tell me,” Abel Scraggs said, when he returned to the bar-room—“ you needn’t tell me ; that chap’s got money if no one else hain’t.”

“ What chap ? ” asked a lazy looking man, with long stretched-out legs.

“ The doctor,” said the landlord, bustling up and down the room. “ That thing ain’t been done since three years ago this summer. Gen. Ross come over with his wife and daughter to visit Newfield a spell ; and he took those three rooms in a lump, and kept ’em the hull time, payin’ handsome for ’em. Now here’s the doctor come and took ’em and is going to pay down too. Them three big rooms on the second floor,” impressively.

“ Do tell ! ” said the long-legged man. “ I didn’t know the doctor was to be married right off.”

“ ’Taint for himself,” replied Abel.

“ Who then ? ” cried a little man in a blue shirt.

“ Never you mind who, as long as he pays down,” said a round man, who was sitting on the counter, vigorously swinging his legs ; “ Money’s your object.”

“That’s so,” groaned a discontented voice.

“Shut your mouth up, Pepper,” returned the round man; “’taint the day for dismals.”

“It’s alwa’s the day for dismals,” returned Pepper.

“Come now, Abel, tell us,” said the man of the blue shirt. “If the doctor ain’t going to be married right off, who is?”

“No one to my knowin’. Them rooms is for his mother and a young lady what is comin’ to see him.”

“Do tell,” said the long-legged man again.

“Another young lady,” groaned Pepper, as he stored away this bit of information to tell his wife. “As if he hadn’t enough, flirtin’ with the widder and the parson’s daughter.”

“Who’s the young lady?” asked the little man.

“That’s more’n I’d like to ask any man,” replied Abel, “especially the doctor with his airs. Law! a body’d think he lived on starch and pokers, and drunk mucilage, and chewed gum arabic. There ain’t no askin’ his business.”

“He hain’t been in the bar-room once to my knowin’,” said the round man.

“Nary once,” said the landlord, “till this morning. Then he walks in as grand as a gobbler, and says he’d like some rooms if I have any vacant. Well, I tells him, I might have one or two, not mentioning that times was dull, and there ain’t over many puttin’ up here at present. Well he guessed he’d look at ’em, so I

showed him them three. 'These go together,' says I, to see what he'd say. He asked about their being near to the kitchen, and hearin' they wasn't, he said hed' take 'em."

"Do tell," cried the long-legged man.

"Now, if that ain't havin' more money than a fellow can well stand, what is? I'd no idea he'd take 'em, especially when he said two ladies was comin'. In my day they'd 'ave took one and slept together. But I ain't findin' no fault: he'll pay down handsome."

"What do you ask him for 'em?" said the little man.

"Now, Tom Wade," said the long-legged man, "that's what I call a leadin' question."

"I ain't consarned about what you call it," returned Tom.

"I hain't no objections to tellin' him, Luke, if he wants to know," said Abel. "It's fifteen dollars a week and boardin' the two."

"And he said nothin' agin' it," said the round man, to whom the sum of fifteen dollars was a small fortune. "Whew! it ain't picked off of every bush, Abel."

"I never thought I'd pick it off o' him."

"What did you show 'em to him then for?" inquired Luke Brighton, a hopeful son of Miss Amelia's ancient lover.

"Well, to tell the truth," said the landlord, "I just did it to try him. I wanted to see if all they said about

him was true. And then again, if he didn't engage them rooms, it would take a pound or so of starch out of him to say he couldn't afford it. But I was took there."

"So you was," cried the round man, rubbing his round hands, and laughing—"so you was, 't'was a good joke on ye."

"Well, 'twas a payin' one," said Abel, with great good humor. "And it's certain he's got the money folks tell on."

"That's the way o' the world," groaned Pepper; "he's got the money and I hain't. Some folks has and some folks hasn't. It's drudge and work with me, and lord it with him."

"Widow Scott made a big penny by that matrimonial spec o' hern," said Brighton, as if he had not just escaped being her cousin.

"A streak o' luck," wailed Pepper.

"See here, old melancholy," said the round man, taking a large jack-knife from his pocket, "just put an end to that miserable existence o' your'n. I won't charge nothin' for the use of the knife."

Pepper shuddered. "Don't be foolin' with a man who has a family like mine to support. If they weren't hangin' round me I might be tempted."

"Law, if it wa'n't for them," said Luke, "you might play round lively, and marry the widder."

"He wouldn't have a chance there," said Tom Wade of the blue shirt; "her style's ahead o' him."

"I dunno about that," said Luke. "It's the gals that's upish and offish, and wantin' somebody fine, but take a widder now an' they'll take up with most any one, so 's 't he's respectable and behaves himself generally. They don't wait for their husband to be cold in the grave 'fore they're chasin' another man."

"That's so," returned Mr. Pepper.

"Well," said Pete, the round man, "there ain't a house in Newfield where such style is carried on as they have up to Widder Scott's."

"If you call impudence style, I'm in with you," said Pepper, dismally.

"What now?" cried Wade, "What's happened?"

"Nothin' much. Only when folks has been friends for years, it ain't no sign they kin insult 'em."

"In course not," agreed Pete.

"Well, my woman and Mis' Barker has been hand in glove since they first got acquainted. They'd run into each other's house to borry a bit of any thing as if they was to home. But things has altered. The other day Mis' Pepper she run over to the old widder's a spell. A girl comes to the door, and shows her into the parlor—for all she says she'll go right into the kitchen where Mis' Barker is. So she had to set down in the parlor on one o' them fine chairs. The girl she looks at her a spell and then she asks her name—"

"Do tell," interrupted Luke.

"Now that ain't Newfield manners anyhow, if it is the way they do in Philadelphia. But my woman she was

up to her. 'What's your name?' says she. 'Jane,' says the girl. 'Jane what?' 'O'Riel,' says the girl, laughing as if she was awful pleased. 'Well, Miss O'Riel,' says Mis' Pepper, 'I didn't come to see you; I come to see widder Barker, and if you just tell me where she is, I'll thank ye.'"

"It's my opinion," said Pete, "that hired girls ain't a payin' institution. There's havin' 'em round and takin' their sass—"

"Besides," said Luke, "they waste more'n they earn—leavin' their wages alone."

"And the eatin'," said Tom Wade. "Now there's my wife's second cousin on her mother's side—she kep' a hired girl 'cause she lived on a farm. I've heard her tell how the sassages disappeared. 'Twas a caution."

"Well, it's time *I* disappeared," said Pete, jumping off of the counter, "or my little woman'll be after me."

Meanwhile Thurston drove up the street, as well pleased with the bargain as Abel Scraggs himself. His mother would have a quiet home near him for a few weeks. He was rather displeased that Miss Emerson had taken into her capricious head to come to Newfield.

Daisy was coming out of the rectory gate as he passed. He stopped.

"Whither are you bound?" he asked.

"I am going for a walk for my health, according to your commands."

"I am glad that you are obedient," he said, alight-

ing from the carriage. "A walk will do a great deal of good, but a ride is better. Will you go."

"Gladly. I don't ride as often as I did before the widow—" she began, laughing.

"I have made peace with you twice for that," he said, as he lifted her in. "How many more times shall I be called to an account?"

As they passed Sam's hut, sounds of rude laughter and loud conversation mingled with oaths greeted their ears. Daisy's heart gave a bound of thankfulness when she remembered that Paul was not with them, but safe at home. The child's conduct was better outwardly from force, but the inward heart was as wicked and rebellious as before. He had not been at Sam's once since the night she had found him there; for a strict watch was kept over him, and he was not allowed in the street unless accompanied by one of his parents or Horatio.

"I received a letter from my mother this morning, which I think will interest you," Thurston said to Daisy when Sam's hut was left far behind. "She is coming to Newfield next week."

"Oh, Thurston; is she indeed! And I shall see her? I have wanted to so much."

"You will see her and love her, too."

"I know I shall love her, but I am afraid she will not love me." It is not necessary to record the doctor's answer; suffice to say that it was very much to the point, and that Daisy's fears were assuaged. "She writes,"

Thurston said, at length, "that Miss Emerson is to accompany her."

"Who is she?"

"She is a cousin of my brother Wolcott's wife, and an admirer of my mother." He did not add that she admired any one else.

"A young lady?"

"Oh, yes. Is this the end of the road?" he added, as they were stopped by a closed gate.

"This is the toll gate," Daisy said, thinking of the young lady, and wishing that she would not come.

"Does any one live here?" Thurston rapped on the house with the whip-handle. A tall old-young boy or a short young-old man appeared in answer to the summons. He might have been fifteen or fifty-five: his hair might have been light from extreme youth, or white from age; his smooth face might have indicated boyishness or frequent and close shaving—no one knew. He possessed all the gravity and dignity becoming to such an uncertain individual, and replied to Thurston's inquiry concerning the amount of toll as if that one word determined the financial affairs of all America: he cast his eyes wearily up the road as he spoke.

"You have a fine view from here," Thurston said, pleasantly, following the direction of his eyes.

"Yes, oh, yes!" he returned in a grieved tone, as though that view were the one drawback to his earthly happiness.

"It extends at least three miles," Thurston went on. "Those steeples are in Manning, are they not?"

"Yes, oh, yes," in the same weary tone. "Here is your change." The last was with reproach mingled with surprise that Thurston would accept the money back.

As they drove away, a child ran out of the door. But whether it was the individual's grandchild or younger brother, they were unable to determine.

"The bishop is to be here soon, isn't he?" the doctor said, as they went on.

"In three weeks. There will be a large class. You will come to see them confirmed, Thurston?"

"I shall be there." Then he added, after a short pause, "What would you think, Daisy, if I were to tell you that it was my intention to be confirmed then?"

"What would I *think*! I would know that it would be the happiest day of my life." There were tears in her eyes as she spoke. "Is it true, Thurston?"

"It is true, my darling. I intend speaking to your father about it this evening."

"I never thought that I should be as happy as I am to-day," she murmured.

CHAPTER XXIX.

“And down I went to fetch my bride ;
But, Alice, you were ill at ease ;
This dress and that by turns you tried,
Too fearful that you would not please.”

—ALFRED TENNYSON.

MRS. ST. JAMES and Miss Emerson entered New-field with grandeur quite equal to Mrs. Scott's. Indeed it was the same barouche that she employed that brought them.

Great was Abel Scraggs' excitement when this dusty, worn-out vehicle drew up before the “White Bear.” The night before Mrs. Scraggs and he had spent many hours practicing the manner in which they would receive these distinguished visitors ; but now that they had actually come, the rehearsed ceremonies fled to the winds—as they always do—and Mrs. Scraggs, who was to have stood at her husband's right hand in her Sunday gown, was scrubbing the cellar steps in her Saturday gown, which was very dampened in front at that. The ladies had not been expected so soon, so Mr. Scraggs could do nothing but receive them alone with such manners as he could muster at the moment. In place of the majestic bow of the night before, he bobbed his head a dozen times or less, and in such quick succession that Mrs. St. James began to wonder if there were any danger of the

little round ball's breaking off. Instead of "Welcome to Newfield and the White Bear," delivered in last night's stentorian tones, he mumbled out something about not expecting them so soon, but really was very glad; it was very pleasant to be surprised by friends. He insisted upon shaking hands with them. And, in conducting them into the little whitewashed parlor, he walked upon their trailing robes with as much grace as brides tread upon the carpeted street—the performance, however, was not so gratifying. When the ladies were fairly seated upon the stiff pine chairs, and the white painted door closed upon them, the excited landlord hastened to find his wife, whose agitation on hearing of the arrival was greater than his own; so great indeed that the two bottom steps were not scrubbed, but put off for a more convenient season. She ran up the back stairs to her own chamber, and hurriedly changed her outer garments. The inner ones remained damp, and were an unpleasant reminder, during her intercourse with the fine ladies, of her more humble pursuits.

Mrs. Scraggs had so far recovered her usual composure, when her Sunday dress was donned, that she was able to make the practiced curtesy to the ladies, with the best of grace. She seated herself with ease upon one of the aforesaid luxuriant seats of pine, and was proceeding to entertain them to the best of her poor ability, when Miss Emerson cut all attempts at sociability short by demanding peremptorily if their rooms were ready to receive them. Of course, they were quite ready: ar-

ranging them had been part of last evening's programme. And Mrs. Scraggs, seeing that nothing more was required of her, conducted them up stairs. Thurston had not expected them until afternoon; but the report reached his ears, that a second barouche had been seen in Newfield, and he knew that they had come, and hastened to the hotel, where he found them awaiting him. It was arranged before he left them that Daisy would call with him the following afternoon.

How her heart beat, when he told her! She had looked for their coming so anxiously, and now that they were here, she would never dare to approach them; but Thurston only laughed at her fears. She donned her best garments: a pink muslin dress, white barege sacque, and hat trimmed with white. They were not becoming, and never had been, and Thurston saw it this afternoon for the first time, and entreated her, in a manly fashion, to wear a calico morning gown, which certainly was becoming, though it was much the worse for wear. But she could not wear a calico dress, and she felt that she was looking very ugly—she knew it, in fact, or Thurston would never have spoken in that way. She was very uncomfortable and silent during the short walk from the rectory to the "White Bear." Thurston, unconscious of having said anything to wound her feelings, wondered what was the matter, and hoped she would not be so quiet during the call, and ended in wishing that Miss Emerson was back in Philadelphia, where she belonged. He had occasion to wish that

several times during the short while they spent with the ladies. She snubbed Daisy most unmercifully, and engrossed all of the doctor's attention herself, and not content with this, she endeavored to draw Mrs. St. James into their conversation, and leave the hated visitor sitting unnoticed. But Mrs. St. James would not allow that. She devoted herself to Daisy, who, to Thurston's great satisfaction, appeared unusually well. She was not a brilliant talker usually, but to-day she talked well.

Miss Emerson's rudeness had cut her to the heart. In simple democratic Newfield every one was on an equality; even the Van Pikes acknowledged that, and Mrs. Scott, with all of her pretensions, was not considered one grain above her neighbors. So Daisy had never known before what it was to be looked down upon. She disliked Miss Abby, in spite of all her efforts not to, and she was angry with Thurston because he talked to her. She would never have spoken to any one who treated him so, she was sure, and she would let him know that she did not like it.

The call was a very short one; Daisy would not stay, and, in her usual impulsive way, rose to go just as Miss Emerson was in the midst of a graphic description of a new opera. Thurston preferred to remain a little longer, and she was wicked enough to make that a reason for going. There was not a word spoken between them on their way home. Daisy was angry and Thurston was troubled. With his usual discernment he saw the look of disap-

pointment on his mother's face when he introduced his future bride, and the sneering smile with which Miss Abby greeted her. If they could see Daisy as he did ! If Abby had only staid at home ! He knew that she would influence his mother against Daisy.

"Will you come in ?" Daisy said, coolly, as they reached the rectory.

"For a little while," he said, to her surprise ; she had supposed he would return to Miss Abby immediately. But he saw that there were clouds between, and he wanted them cleared away. What were his mother, Miss Abby, or the world, that they should come between Daisy and him ! Unfortunately the whole family were gathered in the sitting-room. And, seeing that there would be no opportunity to say one word to her, he did not remain long.

Mrs. Scott and Mrs. Barker called very soon upon Mrs. St. James and Miss Emerson. The young widow and Miss Abby found to their delight that they were twin souls, and a violent intimacy sprang up between them, which was to strengthen (if possible) with passing years. Mrs. Scott, who was of a poetical turn, wrote some lines upon it, which Miss Abby publicly applauded and secretly sneered at.

There were private picnics of a select few ; so select at times that they consisted only of the two young ladies. At other times Mrs. St. James went with them, and then Thurston would stroll over, and bring them home. On one occasion Daisy accompanied him, but

Abby's sneers and Mrs. Scott's slights were so visible that she never could be persuaded to go again.

Mr. and Mrs. Brentwell exchanged many calls with Mrs. St. James ; and, as they grew better acquainted, they became great friends, and Mrs. St. James began to love Daisy for her own sake, as well as Thurston's. She especially admired Horatio, and before she left the village, it was arranged that he should spend the following winter in the city, attending the medical college, and that her house should be his home.

CHAPTER XXX.

“Ruins ! A charm is in the word !

It makes us smile, it makes us sigh ;

’Tis like the note of some spring bird.

Recalling other springs gone by,

And other wood notes which we heard

With some sweet face in some green lane,

And never can so hear again ! ”

—HON. MRS. NORTON.

A LITTLE back of Newfield there stood an old dilapidated mansion. It had once been a beautiful home, and cheerful faces were in the now desolate rooms ; glad voices sounded through the empty halls, and flowers bloomed in the long-neglected garden. But this beauty was long passed. The house was a ruin, and the grounds were desolate.

There were two stories in the village concerning this mansion, and the cause of its desolation. The first was the one believed by the strong minded towns-people—the old fogies, who had no taste for sentiment or the beautiful—to whom a stony field was a stony field and not a fine landscape, and a river was an abode for fish, (fish being good for food) and a stream to beware of drowning in. The story which they believed of the old mansion was very simple, and certainly a very tame one. They said that the house was owned by a man who lived in New York, who had once been wealthy, but squandered

all, until his sole possessions were this worn-out homestead and almost worn-out wits. At present his wits—which does not mean honesty—supported him, but they must soon be exhausted, and then, they hoped that he would come to Newfield, and learn to work for his living, cultivating the long-neglected fields and repairing the old house.

The other party,—Romantics we may call them—believed that the house was haunted, and that the last owner was dead. The legend was, that many years ago, a widow with two stalwart sons and three beautiful daughters lived there. Through the long summer the house was filled with guests, and there was gayety there that Newfield never knew before, and would never know again. Of course, the daughters had lovers, and the sons had “*faire ladies*,” but of all the lovers there was none that compared with the proud Englishman who gently wooed and won the youngest of the widow’s daughters. He was many years older than she, the legend ran, but they loved each other ardently, and if the course of true love ever were allowed to run smooth, theirs would have been one of the happiest marriages since the time of Adam and Eve. But never did a course of love run rougher. A rival appeared who threw great rocks into this stream of love. And this rival was the young girl’s mother, a well-kept, handsome woman. The passion which she conceived for the proud Englishman was really fearful, and she tried every means to win him from the daughter; but to no

avail ; the proud Englishman would not be won, and obstinately insisted upon being married to the maiden very soon. The mother, seeing that fair means were of no avail, decided to try foul ; and so one night when the daughter slept the sleep of innocence, she arose from her sleepless couch, and clutching in her hand the razor her husband had been wont to use, glided, like a demon of the night, down the dark halls into her daughter's chamber. For a moment she bent over her—only a moment, and then she cried, “Farewell, false child, farewell ;” and drew the father's razor over the fair white throat with such exactness and such force that the young maid never woke from her slumbers. When the woman saw the deed she had done, she doubtless saw too that she had overstepped the mark, and not being able to step back, she went raving crazy. Her cries awoke the family, and they appeared *en dishabille* upon the scene. Their costumes, however, did not hinder their taking an active part in the play. The proud Englishman seized a pistol from somewhere—such articles being always at hand in high tragedy—and shot the maniac mother through the head, putting an end to her misery and remorse while he eased his own mind. One of the stalwart sons, not understanding exactly how things stood, seeing that much shooting was going on, seized another pistol from somewhere else, and shot the proud Englishman through the heart. All this was accompanied by shrill cries and screams, and curses not deep but loud. Here the legend comes

to an end. Whether the living buried the dead, whether the last murderer was brought to trial, or whether those remaining fought until their end was like the end of the Kilkenny cats, no one was able to tell. But every one (of this faith) could bear witness to having seen some one who had seen somebody else who had heard these shrieks and curses sounding out upon the night air ; for the Romantics maintained that the spirits of the dead still dwelt there, and nightly rehearsed that little farce. The matter-of-facts turned up their practical noses at this. And the Romantics, to prove it, would take long moonlight walks up to the mansion, hoping to hear some sound, and would tremble at the rustling of the leaves, and fly for dear life at the whip-poor-will's cry. The next day, when the adventure was thought over in soul-inspiring sunlight, they grew bold, and to show how courageous they could be, when occasion required it, the next trip into the innocent cellar was made without a candle.

But which ever party, the Matter-of-facts or Romantics, was in the right, both were electrified, one day, a short time after the departure of Mrs. St. James and Miss Abby, by the intelligence that the house was to be deserted no longer ; a family was really moving in. Who they were, what they were, why they came, whence they came, were the four questions that agitated the Newfield mind. The new comers were discussed in every family, by every fireside, until the mysterious strangers became a household word. At last it was known that their

name was Millard, that the family consisted of three persons—father, mother and son, and that the father and son were to keep a drug-store in Dr. Doreann's old office. In a few days more it came out that they came from New York city. Later it was known that they were quite poor, and it was supposed that they had the old mansion rent free; but whether the spirits who haunted it, or the fast New Yorker who owned it, gave this permission, no one pretended to know.

It was a hot afternoon about two weeks after the advent of the Millards. The three sisters were seated in the cool vine-covered door of the rectory, busy with sewing and books, and watching the few passers-by.

"I wonder that any one goes out when it is so hot," Lestie was saying. "I'm so thankful that I don't have to. There are two more coming up the street: an old woman and a young man. They look as if they were almost dead. How he swaggers, but he's handsome! They're coming here, I declare! Who can they be?"

"They'll hear you," said Daisy. "Good afternoon," she said, as the strangers approached, rising.

"Is your mother at home?" inquired the woman curtly, while the young man stared at Daisy.

"She is. Will you sit down?"

"You can say that Mrs. Millard is here," said that lady, seating herself in the chair which Daisy had offered, and motioning the young man to another, which he took.

She was an ill-favored woman, a little below medium

height. Her face and hands were dark. Her thin grey hair was pulled off of the high forehead, and knotted in the smallest imaginable knot behind. Her nose was very much like common noses, but her mouth was the largest, perhaps, that mortal ever saw. She wore a dirty black alpaca dress and sacque, and a rusty black bonnet sat upon the back of her head, as if it had been pounded on from behind. The young man was quite good looking. Long ago he had decided to his own satisfaction that he was a handsome young man, and ever since abided by that decision. He was of short stature, and his face showed signs of ill health. He had a great desire to shine in society, and was much given to getting off old jokes, and he dealt in second-hand witticisms. But he was good-natured and pleasant, and had unbounded faith in his own superiority.

“Yes, I am Mrs. Millard,” the woman continued, while Christie went to call Mrs. Brentwell, “and this is my son, Mark. I brought him down to get acquainted with you. We’ve been in the village now over two weeks and not a soul has called. I *did* expect the minister’s wife would have been to see me, but it seems I was mistaken. So I told Mark this morning that we’d start out and hunt you up.”

“It has been so hot,” Daisy said, “that my mother has not been out for some time.”

“I know it’s hot; I know that well, but I am accustomed to having the minister’s wife call immediately on me. I consider it a part of her duty.”

“It is no more her duty than any one else’s,” cried Lestie; “she’s married to father—not to the church.”

“Hoighty, toighty!” cried Mrs. Millard.

“It is my mother’s pleasure to call upon my father’s parishioners,” said Daisy, “but not her duty. We did not know, however, that you intended connecting yourself with St. Paul’s.”

“Some truth there,” said Mark, who was beginning to admire Daisy very much.

Mrs. Brentwell came out at that moment, and, before there was time for a proper introduction, Mrs. Millard cried, “I am Mrs. Millard. I suppose you are Mrs. Brentwell. This is my son Mark. He’s my only living child,” she went on, when they were seated, “left out of ten. It’s not many that’s seen the trouble that I have in my day. I’ve buried nine children, four sisters, three brothers, and my father and mother. How many does that make, Mark?”

“Eighteen,” returned Mark, with an alacrity that showed he had done that sum in addition before.

“Eighteen times I’ve gone into fresh mourning,” Mrs. Millard continued. “I feel as if I was a stranger in a strange land. And here I’ve been in the village over two weeks, and not a soul has come to welcome me.”

“We have not seen you at St. Paul’s, and so we did not know that you were church people,” said Mrs. Brentwell. It was the only remark she was able to wedge in during the long call. Mrs. Millard took the

responsibility of the conversation upon herself, and for two hours she sustained it unaided. She gave minute accounts of the death scenes of her eighteen lost ones, incidents in their lives, and spoke of their marvellous talents and wondrous acts. Mark's infant sayings and doings followed. Then came full details of their moving. She told how each box was packed, how some were unpacked and packed over, and how, on the first night of their arrival, everything that they wanted immediately was packed in the bottom of the biggest box, and how they were all unpacked before they found anything—and so on, until Mark politely remarked that he felt a goneness somewhere in the region of his stomach. "I guess it must be supper time," he said, "and we'd better swelter home. The store'll be opened to-morrow," he said to Daisy, as they arose to go, "and it'll be quite a show. Better come around. I s'pect there'll be a crowd; Newfielders don't see such sights often. The remarks they'll make will be good for deaf ears. Bring your little sisters. Better come early."

Daisy thanked him coolly.

"Do you know where there is a doctor?" Mrs. Millard asked suddenly, stopping on the steps. Mrs. Brentwell told her of Thurston.

"A young man?"

"Yes."

"And the only one in town? I don't like young doctors, but I suppose we'll have to employ him. Mark's been ailing this long time."

"I ain't so bad," said Mark, uneasily.

"You promised to see him for your mother's sake," Mrs. Millard said, entreatingly.

"Oh, I'll see him ! Some know-nothing or other," Mark said, as they departed.

Horatio met them at the gate.

"Who are they ?" he cried, as he came up to his sisters. They told him. "I don't want him to come here again," he said, when they had given a long account of the call ; "and I hope you won't encourage it."

CHAPTER XXXI.

And, oh, thou cruel jealousy !
That came between my love and me.
Thou monster green
Of demons seen :
Of demons known and sent
Our perfect union to prevent.

—THE AUTHOR.

THE Millards had called at the rectory on Tuesday. The following Thursday was the day set to start on the long talked of excursion to the Island. At the eleventh hour Silas had begun to realize that in politeness Mrs. Scott must be invited to join the party. Thurston, too, felt that the neglect to do so would be unpardonable. So Daisy, as the proper person, called and formally invited her, hoping that she would decline. But she quickly expressed her great pleasure, and smilingly accepted.

“I certainly did not think that she would go,” Daisy said, as they sat on the porch together the evening before the excursion.

“Well, I should not have accepted such a late invitation,” said Lestie.

“I am sorry that it was necessary to invite her,” said Silas, “and I didn’t think of it until the doctor insisted upon it.”

“We must make her feel that she is welcome,” said

Daisy was silent. "The doctor insisted upon it." Then he wanted her! Why should he? No one else did. Could he not live one week without seeing her every day?

There was a cloud the size of a man's hand in the fair sky of Daisy's happiness. She was angry with Thurston because he wanted the widow to accompany them; and she was jealous of her, and would not see that there was no way to avoid giving the invitation.

"There is Mark Millard coming up the street," announced Paul. "I wanted to go to his opening to-day, and mother wouldn't let me. Everybody was there."

"Everybody!" said Silas. "I was walking by just as he took the shutters down, and all I saw was a yellow dog, which appeared, from the way he ordered it around, to belong to him."

"He's coming in," said Horatio, "girls, be very cool."

"Good evening, ladies," he said, as he came up. "You see I come back like a bad penny."

"Good evening," Daisy said quietly, while Christie introduced him to Silas and Horatio.

Paul brought a chair from the house, and he seated himself in his favorite attitude, his hands under his knees and swinging his short legs.

"I didn't see the young ladies at the opening to-day," he said.

"Silas says there wasn't any body there," said Paul.

"Whoever Silas is, he is greatly mistaken. The streets were crowded. I thought at one time that I

should have to telegraph to the city for some policemen." He watched Daisy attentively to see how this wonderful announcement impressed her. But she had not heard one word he said. She was thinking still of the morrow, wondering what the doctor would think, and if he would care if she were to remain at home. She had half determined to do so.

"There ain't any telegraph office in Newfield," Paul said in reply to Mark's wise observation.

"A pleasant evening," Mark said to Daisy; he was greatly annoyed by that small boy's remarks. She did not heed.

"Very pleasant," Horatio said stiffly.

"What would we do if we were to have a thunderstorm to-morrow?" said Herbert, looking at the sky.

"I wouldn't be afraid," said Lestie boldly.

"Mrs. Scott would be," said Silas. "She always goes into the doctor's office when it thunders; she thinks that is the safest side of the house, and he has about all he can do to—"

"Speaking of the doctor," interrupted Mark, "reminds me that I called on him this morning. Can't Newfield have a better physician than he is? I wouldn't trust my Zip in his hands. No, sir, I wouldn't. I don't like the fellow."

"He's a great favorite in Newfield," said Christie. "He's coming in the gate now."

"Ah, he visits here! I have no desire to meet him socially." Neither had Thurston any desire to meet

Mark socially. Their conversation that morning had not left pleasant impressions on either side. The doctor sat down by Daisy, tired and silent. Horatio was displeased that Mark was there, and tried to make him feel his displeasure by maintaining a dignified silence ; Daisy would not talk ; Christie saw there was a cloud over the party, and was troubled ; Silas never did talk when there was any one else to say any thing ; Lestie with Paul and Herbert formed a separate group, and talked about the morrow and its pleasures among themselves. So Mark took the conversation upon himself, and sustained it as well as his mother could have done.

The next day dawned fair and bright. They sailed down the river in a yacht that Silas had procured for the occasion, and reached his father's house late in the afternoon. They were not to go to the island until the following morning ; for the ladies were tired, and there was a great deal to be done before they could be fairly domiciled. Mr. Thorpe and his two sons met them at the boat-landing, and, scarcely waiting for Silas's formal introductions, shook every one heartily by the hand. Mrs. Thorpe was waiting at the door to receive them, and greeted them as if she had known and loved them from their childhood. There was a little time for resting and talking, which every one did with all their might, and then they were called into the kitchen, where the large well filled supper table was spread.

When this meal was over, Farmer Thorpe proposed a visit to the famously large old elm by the river side, the

great family pride. It was some distance from the house, and Mrs. Scott was just about to decline going, knowing that Paul would likely be her escort, when Daisy, pleading her fatigue, begged to be excused. Then the widow knew that the doctor would fall to her share, and she smilingly put on her bonnet. Thurston was disappointed. There was little pleasure for him where Daisy was not, but he said nothing; for he was too unselfish to ask her to go when he knew she needed rest. And she, heeding his silence, thought it indifference, and wondered that he did not remain with her.

Mrs. Thorpe conducted her to the room which she was to share with Mrs. Scott that night, and went down again to join the party. Daisy sat down by the window to watch them as they departed. Horatio escorted Mrs. Thorpe. Lestie, in one of her most entertaining moods, bewildered and delighted Mr. Martin Thorpe as they walked together. Herbert and Paul walked with any one or anywhere as occasion required or it suited their pleasure. Mr. Thorpe and his second son plodded on together, talking in a dull way of their farm-work: what they had done last week, what they would do next, how they were ahead of farmer A. and behind farmer B. They spoke of the health of the cattle, and calculated the probable loss or gain if the cow with a crumpled horn were sold to farmer C. for the price he offered: they waxed eloquent contemplating the laying hens, and reasoned well on the growth of the pullets. Silas and Christie walked slowly behind these two, not talking of

farms, of earth or heaven, but of their own two hearts. But they did not bring up the rear. Far behind them all were the doctor and Mrs. Scott : she was so tired, she had said, that if she went at all she must walk very slowly. Thurston would have been glad if she had remained at home, but that was not for him to say ; his it was only to creep along bearing the burden of her fragile but heavy form.

Daisy's heart ached when she saw them. She could not know his thoughts : she only saw his actions, and she left the window hastily so that she should not see. She threw herself on the bed, and buried her face in the pillow, but she could not shut the vision from her sight. She thought of how tired and sleepy she had been when she came up stairs, and wondered if she would ever be sleepy again, or ever again close her eyes in slumber : she knew she would not ; she would die, she knew that, and she hoped her death would be that night ; that when Thurston came back he would find her dead. How glad he would be ! for then he could marry the widow. She even imagined the grand wedding they would have, and the bride's gorgeous apparel, but then everything grew indistinct before her—and suddenly some one drew her face from the pillow, and kissed her. She opened her eyes. Thurston was bending over her.

“ Why, how came you here ? ” she asked.

“ I found when we reached the great elm, that you had been left entirely alone, and so I came back. ”

“You could not have been there and back already ; it was only a moment ago that you went.”

“A moment ago ! It was an half an hour. See ! it is growing dark. You have been asleep. Are you rested ?”

“Very much.” Was it the short nap that had brought back her strength, or was it the presence and certain love of that strong man ? She did not know ; but she felt willing to live now, and was rather glad, upon the whole, that she had been locked in the embrace of sleep, and not of sleep’s twin brother, when Thurston returned.

The Island cottage was a small two story frame building. Mr. Thorpe had taken over what furniture they would need, and fresh provisions were sent over daily. Daisy was installed as cook, and Christie was her assistant. The first day the burden of the work fell upon them ; for Mrs. Scott could not or would not, and Lestie seeing that those who will, may, followed in her idle footsteps. But the next day there was a complete revolution : the gentlemen joined the workers. Horatio set the table—no matter if it did look as if he had stood in the closet door and thrown the dishes on. Herbert washed the dishes, and Silas swept the floor. The doctor made the fires and helped Daisy cook. And Paul, entering into the spirit of it, cut the wood and brought it in. And so for the remainder of their stay Daisy and Christie were relieved of the manifold duties of housekeeping and housework.

CHAPTER XXXII.

"Fare thee well ! and if forever,
Still forever, *fare thee well*;
Even though unforgiving, never
'Gainst thee shall my heart rebel."

—BYRON.

"GOOD morning, folks. I was just going by, and I thought I'd drop in. My stars ! Daisy, how awful sick you look. I guess your visit didn't do you so much good after all. When did you get home ?"

"Night before last," said Daisy, going on with her sewing.

"Night before last !" returned Martha. "You stayed an awful while. Everybody was wondering if you meant to stay all summer. Mr. Pepper says you don't think much about trouble to go off enjoying yourself like that. O girls, it just kills me to hear that man talk ! He's got a new notion now. What do you think it is ? O you'll never guess ! I 'most died when I heard it. Why he says that when folks die that instead of going to heaven or the *other place*, they come back to this earth in the form of an animal. Did you ever hear the like ? And he says that whenever a horse or a cat or anything is born, we may know that somebody has just died, and that that is the reason that animals have so many young during epidemics."

"I don't believe it," said Lestie.

"Oh, neither do I! but I just tell you because 'ma says it's alwa's best to know everything. But that isn't the funniest part. You know he's alwa's complaining."

"He doesn't look well," said Christie. "I really am sorry for him: he appears so ill."

"Oh my stars, so am I! And, you know, he's afraid he's going to die, and that he'll turn into a cat, and that his wife will get him: she's talking about getting a kitten and bringing it up to suit her. So he's just worried sick for fear she'll make up her mind to get it about the time he dies. I thought I should die when he told it."

"Surely his wife might make him happier," said Daisy, thinking of one whom she would make happy.

"I suppose you haven't heard the news," Martha went on.

"We haven't heard anything," said Lestie, eagerly.

"Laury Van Pike's going to be married."

"We knew that," Lestie returned; "father is to marry them."

"Oh, is he? Well, I heard that the wedding was to be awful plain, and that they're going off on an awful long weddin' touer. I suppose the fee'll be real big. Now, Lestie, if I was you, I'd just ask my 'pa for it to get a lace shawl: they're all the style in Paris. Jane Wade says so. Laury's got three, and they are perfectly *elegant*. I'm just dying for one. I was telling a *friend* of mine the other day that I thought every man ought to give an awful big fee, when they were married,

and *they* didn't think so. Don't you think that Andrew Moffatt is an awful torment? The more I snub him, the more he comes round. It does men good to snub 'em. Don't you know it does, Daisy? You never snubbed the doctor half enough: he's awful independent. But then I should think you'd be afraid of him; he's so awful grand and dignified, aint you?"

"Not a bit," Daisy laughed, wondering if it were wrong to think that her perfect love had cast out all fear—when he was only human.

"I was telling Moffat the other day," Martha rattled on, "(so that he needn't put on so many airs, you know,) that I could 'ave had the doctor if I'd just winked my eye, but that I thought I'd leave him for you. 'Oh,' says he, 'he didn't mean anything; he's only a flirt.' 'Now, Andrew,' says I, 'you needn't be talking that way o' your betters. Dr. St. James ain't half the flirt you be.' He's an awful fellow, you know! 'Well,' says he, (don't you never breathe a word)—'Well,' says he, 'anybody with half an eye can see that I ain't flirting with you, (as though I'd flirt with him,) and the town's talking about the doctor's flirting with Mrs. Scott, when he's engaged to Daisy Brentwell.'"

"I don't believe it," cried Lestie.

"Law, neither do I! but folks say it, that's all. The doctor's alwa's talking to girls, you know, and they call it flirting. Why, he squeezes my hand *awfully* when he shakes hands; but don't let on I told you; I don't want him to know I noticed it."

Lestie and Christie said they would not, but Daisy's lips did not uncloze.

“I'm awful tired o' men any how ; ain't you, Daisy ? And there's Andrew Moffatt just dying to keep steady company with me. Well, I must be going. I've been out all the morning. I went up to see Mis' Scott. She ain't never returned ma's call, and I thought may be she was affronted because I hadn't been to see her, but she was out riding with the doctor, and I hadn't time to wait, so I didn't see her after all. He's going to take her to a concert in Fairhope this evening. If I was you, Daisy, I wouldn't let my beau take other folks off to concerts like he does. I must go. Come see me, all. Good morning.”

Lestie accompanied her to the door where she lingered to repeat another bit of gossip. Christie went up to Daisy. “Dear sister,” she said, looking into her pale face, “you must not mind Martha's gossip. You know she doesn't get things just right.”

The sewing fell from Daisy's hand. “I know, Christie. I think I will go up stairs now ; my headaches. If Thurston comes—”

“I will call you.”

“No, no, I cannot see him.”

“Daisy, listen to me. If the doctor calls you must see him, and don't pain him by repeating this gossip. Be kind and loving as you always are. There is no truth in these reports, and let them say what they will ; you will soon be his wife.”

Daisy folded away her sewing. "But there was the ride this morning," she said, hesitatingly.

"Mrs. Scott will send any excuse before she will see any one whom she doesn't want to see."

"Tell Lestie not to tell father or any of the family."

"I will if you don't want them to know. And you will see Thurston?"

"Yes, yes. Oh, Christie, if Mrs. Scott—" she ran out of the room without finishing the sentence. Christie sat quietly down again to her sewing, fearing that more was true than she wanted Daisy to believe.

Nothing delighted Lestie more than keeping a secret. So she readily promised to say nothing of Martha's communication.

It was late in the afternoon when Thurston called. Daisy was waiting alone in the parlor, and she greeted him lovingly when he entered. "You are pale, my darling," were his first words. "I am afraid the island air has not done you the good we thought it would."

"I have had the headache," she said, laying that weary head upon his shoulder.

"In two months we will be married, and then that southern trip will make you well. No more pale cheeks and weary sad eyes."

"Two months!" she repeated, as she clung to him, "Oh, Thurston, is that a long way off? So much may happen between."

"It is a long way off, but nothing shall happen

between to part us. If Dr. Lewis, who is to take my place when I am away, could come next week, we would be married then."

"Where is he now?"

"In Europe. He will return the first of September, and be in Newfield on the tenth."

"Laura Van Pike gives a small party this evening," Daisy said, after long, happy plans for the future, "and she sent me an invitation this afternoon to attend. Can you go?"

"This evening? I am afraid not."

"Afraid not!" she repeated, remembering for the first time since he came, what Martha had said. "Why?"

"I have an engagement which I cannot break. I am very sorry; for it would give me a great deal of pleasure to accompany you. You will not go alone: Horatio will go."

"Of course; but I want you to be there," she insisted.

"I must be in Fairhope to-night."

"In Fairhope, Thurston!" she repeated, while her cheeks flushed scarlet.

"You certainly will not mind it," he said anxiously, seeing the change that came over her.

"I do mind," turning away.

"Why, I have sometimes thought that Horatio is as dear to you as I am, and that his escort—"

His quiet tone angered her, and she interrupted him.

“I always think and always know, Dr. St. James,” she cried, “that Horatio is a great deal dearer to me than you are, and I prefer his escort at all times.”

If he were going to take Mrs. Scott to the concert in Fairhope, he would know that she did not care.

“Daisy ! Daisy !” he said, taking her hand. She snatched it from him and rose excitedly from her seat.

“I am very sorry that I troubled you—”

“Daisy, what does this mean ? I am surprised, darling. Sit down again.”

“I will not sit down,” as his quietness made her more angry. “You will be over being surprised some day. Nothing surprises me now.”

Thurston had never seen her angry before, and he did not know the right way to calm it. “What does this mean ?” he said again, in an almost stern voice, standing beside her.

“It means that I did not want you to go to Fairhope to-night, and that it was very presumptuous in me to have any feelings on the subject.”

“It is not presumptuous in you at all,” he answered. “If it were possible, I would break the engagement and go with you, but it isn’t. There is no need of your anger. Allow me to explain.”

“I know all about it. I will not hear another word on the subject. I knew it would come to this,” she cried, “I knew it long ago, but I have borne from you treatment that no one else would have borne a day—”

“Daisy,” he said, “will you hear me?”

“No, I will not. Take this;” drawing the ring from her finger, “and let this farce of an engagement end forever.”

He took the ring, and looked on her—more in surprise than grief just then. He had not thought she would go this far: but a word would surely bring her back.

“Daisy,” he said, clasping her in his arms.

“Let me go.”

“I will not let you go, until you are over being angry.”

“I am not angry now. Let me go,” struggling.

“Then you love me yet.”

“I *never* loved you,” determinedly. “Let me go.”

His arms fell from her. “You may go,” he said, in the same quiet tone he had used through it all. She turned and looked on him then for a moment, and realized, as she had not before, what she had done. Then she fled from the room.

Thurston stood looking after her, like one whose brightest hopes in life had gone, and then went staggering from the house.

At the gate he met Horatio, but was going on without speaking, when he arrested him.

“Doctor,” he said, laying his hand on his arm, “what is the matter?”

“I don’t know,” he said. “Daisy may.”

“May know! what?”

“Why she broke it.” He was going on, but Horatio detained him again.

“It is not possible that the engagement is broken. Tell me about it.”

“It is very little that I can tell you. She wanted me to go to Mr. Van Pike’s this evening, but I could not because I must go to Fairhope to hold a consultation with Dr. Thorne, and when I said that she grew very—Horatio, I think she was angry.” He spoke tenderly of her.

“I’ve no doubt of it,” was the brother’s less tender reply. “And she broke it off?”

“Yes. That is all I know. Good-bye.” And he walked quickly down the street. Horatio went into the house. He would find out from Daisy all the trouble, and set things straight in a very little time, he thought. She was not in the sitting-room, and no one had seen her since the doctor had been there, or knew what had occurred. He found her in her room, lying on the bed with her face buried in the pillow. “Daisy!” he cried.

She made no answer.

“Daisy,” he called again. “You are not asleep, I know. Answer me.” She lay motionless.

“Daisy, Daisy,” laying his hand on her shoulder. “Are you dead.” He shook her gently.

“Go away,” she said in a muffled voice.

“I want to talk to you.”

“I don’t want to talk to you. Go away.”

“Daisy, do you know you are very unwise?”

“Horatio,” turning her face to him, “*will* you go?”

“When I please, I will,” angrily. “I want to talk to you. The doctor—”

“I won’t hear a word,” stopping her ears. “Go, go.”

“I won’t go,” he called. “I will talk. You are to blame.” He spoke so loud that she heard him notwithstanding the closed ears, and she opened them again.

“Will you go?”

“Why don’t you answer me?”

“I do answer you. Go on.”

“What am I to tell father?”

“What you please,” wondering what he knew, and how he knew it.

“Daisy will you answer one question?”

“Will you go then?”

“Yes: is this engagement broken forever?”

“Yes.”

“Why did you break it?”

“I’ve answered one question. You must go.”

“I want to talk to you about it.”

“I will not hear a word,” excitedly.

“Never?”

“Never, *never*. Go.”

He stood for a moment, and then went quietly out of the room. He could do nothing at present, he knew.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

I have lost all thought or care
Of what my future life may be,
Or what my present is, or where
I tread, what scenes my eyes may see ;
I only know that thou and I
Have parted for eternity.

—THE AUTHOR.

IN a little while it was known in Newfield that Dr. St. James and Daisy Brentwell were not to be married in September, and later it came out they were never to be married. Mrs. Scott heard it and rejoiced ; and she watched the doctor closely, hoping to discover signs of his joy for his recovered liberty. But all in vain ; what he felt he kept from the world and pursued the same quiet exterior. That he secretly did rejoice, she soon decided to her satisfaction. Mrs. Barker was of the same opinion, and to confirm it, she repeated that Mrs. Pepper had told her that Mr. Pepper had said that the men down at Green's store had said that the doctor looked and acted ten years younger, and that he was getting to be like his old self again—what old self was not known. From the day of hearing this the beautiful widow stood in readiness to have him declare his love for her. And she lay awake several nights to decide what length of time she would let elapse between the proposal and the acceptance. But the days went on, and no

proposal came, and then she decided that for each day he delayed she would delay one day in giving her answer.

Meantime he went quietly on with his work and sorrow, and made no sign. At first, he had hoped that Horatio would find out from Daisy why she was angry with him, and bring about a reconciliation between them, but time passed, and she would say nothing, and then he gave up hope for the present; he would wait, wait, but he knew not for what.

There was one other in Newfield who rejoiced with Mrs. Scott that this engagement was broken, and that was Mark Millard. He had made up his mind the first time that he saw Daisy that she would make him a good wife. The second time he saw her he decided that she should be his wife, and great was his chagrin when he heard that she was engaged to Thurston. But when he had seen them together once, he was well satisfied that there was no love on her side, and that when he (Mark) presented himself to her as an admirer, she would dismiss the doctor and bestow her unfettered heart upon him. So when he heard that the engagement was broken, he knew—though no one else did—that she had broken it for his sake. Now Mark was not usually of a kind and considerate disposition, but he decided kindly this time not to keep her long in suspense, but let the wooing begin immediately, and let that wooing be short. He knew that Horatio was no friend to him and that the courtship could not very well

go on at the rectory. So his mother must be enlisted on his side, and she must bring Daisy to the mansion.

"If you're so anxious about my concerns, just do a little more for me," he said to her, as he ate his dinner one day, by the way of a beginning.

"Dear Mark, what don't I do for you? Your father tells me every day that I am spoiling you."

"Never mind my father! Give me some pear sauce: it's mighty good."

"I saved it all for you," giving him the dish. "Your father didn't have a bit."

"That's all right. What can he expect when he trots off and gets his dinner first and leaves me in the store to starve. I've got something to settle with you, old lady."

"What is it, dear boy?"

"It's Daisy Brentwell. I'm a man of honor, and if it wasn't all over with the doctor and her I shouldn't say a word. I'd let things take their own course, although any one can see with half an eye that it would be a death-blow to her happiness to marry him. Now, I'll make her a husband what is a husband."

"That's because your mother brought you up in the way you should go," she said, fondly.

"Well, I'm up—no matter how I got here. But I wouldn't 'ave minded if you'd brought me up an inch or so higher. As I was saying, I've got my eye on Daisy, and she's only waiting for the asking. But, you see, the courting can't go on at the rectory; because I don't

like Horatio and he knows it. He'd set the folks against me in no time. So I've cooked up a plan, and you've only got to do as I tell you, and that snip won't be nowhere."

"What is it?"

"It's this," leaning his elbow on the table, and laying the forefinger of his right hand in the palm of the left—"it's this. You go to the rectory this afternoon, and get Daisy. She'll be glad enough to come. Of course it will be my business to see her home to-night."

"What'll her brother say?"

"He won't say. He's gone to Fairhope with Dr. St. James, and won't be back till night."

"Don't you want some more cake?"

"No—yes—no. I guess not. I'm off now. She'll be here when I get back?"

"I'll do my best," said the fond mother, and Mark swaggered out.

In less than an hour after Mrs. Millard, in the rusty alpaca and pounded bonnet, was on her way to the rectory. She was heated and tired when she reached there. Mrs. Brentwell received her in the large cool sitting-room. The girls were up stairs, so Mrs. Millard delivered her invitation for Daisy to the mother, who, of course, declined it; the day was too hot, and Daisy was not well. Then Mrs. Millard insisted upon seeing Daisy, that she might have her choice in the matter. So Daisy was called, and to her mother's surprise, her choice was to go. She was tired of staying at home,

she said, in a reckless way ; she had not been out that week. She made a hasty toilet, and half an hour later, she was seated in the long dull sitting-room of the mansion, wondering why she had come, and almost too tired to listen to Mrs. Millard's weary talk, and thankful she didn't have to make reply.

Mr. Millard came in about five o'clock, very hot, very hungry and not very well pleased at the sight of the little visitor. He was a short man with a long nose, a limp in his walk, and a bald spot on the top of his head which he tried to cover with long hairs from behind. He wore a dirty suit of thick grey. He was nervous and irritable, and the world was opposed to him and to his having his rights—that he knew. Every one wronged him. His wife had wronged him by marrying him, his children had wronged him by being born and then by dying. Mark wronged him every hour. Mrs. Millard wronged him every meal he ate ; she put too much sugar in his coffee or not enough ; she made the tea too strong or too weak ; the beef was too tough or too tender ; the bread was too fresh or too dry. And that was the way everything went ; nothing, nobody treated him as he deserved. But his worst foe, his most bitter enemy, was the clerk of the weather. When Mr. Millard wanted it to rain—which he always did on Mrs. Millard's washing days—it was sure to be clear and sunshiny. If he wanted it pleasant, it rained. It was always either too hot or too cold, too wet or too dry. If he had known in what part of the world the

weather clerk lived, he would have gone and had it out with him, but he did not know, and never met any one who did know, so he had to endure it—which he did not do in silence.

Daisy wronged him greatly by being there that day. The parson's daughter! Humph! S'pose she'd come to talk Scripture to him! He'd show her! And he began immediately to talk of the Duke of Wellington, and defiantly gave her his ideas of him and of his abilities to command, which ideas Daisy received in silence. Wellington had never crossed her path; he did very well at the battle of Waterloo, but he was nothing in comparison to Washington! But she did not dare tell Mr. Millard that this was her opinion. So she was silent, and her silence offended him. Mrs. Millard, who had been busy preparing supper, at length announced that it was ready, and the three seated themselves at the little square table which rested against the wall. Mark always remained in the store when his father came to his meals.

Daisy's appetite was never of the best, and to-night she could not force herself to take one mouthful of the poorly cooked food, or to drink the weak beverage Mrs. Millard called tea. She was wondering yet what enchantment brought her there, and what enchantment made her remain. What would Horatio say when he came back from Fairhope? How displeased he would be! Mrs. Millard, seeing that she ate nothing, observed in a delicate way that she might be waiting to eat with

Mark. Daisy blushed at this sudden accusation, and hastened to say that she had no appetite, that she never had, she never ate. The blushing was a great delight to the old dame, who regarded it as a betrayal from Daisy of great love for Mark.

“He’ll be here soon,” she added, smiling all over her great mouth. This remark made Daisy blush so much more that her cheeks seemed to swell to twice their natural size.

“Is Daisy all the name you’ve got?” Mr. Millard asked, not to relieve her embarrassment, however; for with his eyes intent upon his plate, he saw nothing of it, but to gratify his curiosity.

“My right name is Deborah,” she said, remembering, with an aching heart, who had taught her to love that name.

“Deborah!” he repeated. “Well that’s what I call something like a name. There ain’t no sense to Daisy.”

“And I’ll say Deborah after this,” said Mrs. Millard.

“Oh, don’t,” burst from Daisy’s lips. “I don’t—I don’t like it—I’m never called by that name.”

“Well, you’ll like it if I say it,” persisted Mrs. Millard.

“Oh, no! I cannot like it.”

“Why not?” cried Mr. Millard.

“Because,” faintly.

“That ain’t no reason at all,” he growled.

“Come, Deborah,” Mrs. Millard said, “you’ll like it if I say it, I know.”

"I never consider myself addressed when I hear the name," Daisy said, with more determination than politeness. No one had called her by it but Thurston, and no one ever should. Mr. Millard, greatly wronged, and highly indignant at what he considered obstinacy, jerked his chair away from the table, and left the house without another word.

"I'll put on the tea to keep hot," Mrs. Millard said, when he had gone, "and when Mark comes you and I will have something more."

"Thank you, I have finished my supper," Daisy said, as she left the table, and sat down by the window.

"You'll want some fruit cake, when I bring it out. Mark's very fond of it. Can you bake?"

"A little."

"I'm glad o' that," Mrs. Millard went on, bringing out the cake, and beginning to cut it. "There was a girl in New York who took a great shine to Mark, but she couldn't bake fruit cake, and I had to teach her. But it didn't do no good: he wouldn't have married her if she had been made of fruit cake." And from that, until Mark made his appearance, she rehearsed tales of poor girls who had been in love with Mark—all to no purpose.

Mark knew from his father that Daisy was there—that his mother had been successful, so he had walked very fast up the dusty road, and was very hot and breathless when he entered. He seated himself near Daisy, and fanned himself with a huge palm leaf, while

his face wore an expression of the greatest contentment. The plan was working splendidly, he thought. Here was Daisy just ready to fall into his arms, which he would allow her to do pretty soon. Meantime he talked.

"You ought to 've been in our store to day," he said. "I had a tough customer there, I can tell you. The biggest liar in town—could lie the handle off o' that teapot. I was sellin' him some green paint, and he says that 'tain't the genuine article. 'Do you think that I lie?' says I. 'I *know* you do,' says he. With that I fired up. I'm a dreadful peaceful disposition, but when I'm fired, I'm fired. I was just going to hi'st him out o' the store, when father walks in, and I took my hat and left for parts unknown."

"Who was the man?" asked Mrs. Millard, greatly interested.

"Lute—John Lute. Is that supper about ready?"

"It's ready. Come sit up. Come, Deborah."

"Mrs. Millard, I beg that you will not address me by that name," Daisy said, quietly.

"What's the row?" queried Mark, as he seated himself at the table. Mrs. Millard explained, and Daisy had the satisfaction of hearing him say that "Deborah" was not worth two cents: give him the romantic. This decided Mrs. Millard in favor of "Daisy," to that young lady's great relief.

There was so much of the old house to be shown, so much to be said, that had not already been shown and said, that it was nine o'clock before they would allow

her to go. Mark started out to escort her home, and of course she must take his arm. Her little hand barely touched the linen sleeve of his light summer coat, but he drew it through with the tenderness and authority of a lover, which Daisy in her heart, greatly resented.

“Now’s my time,” he said to himself; “now’s my time. I’ve only to say the word, and she’s mine.”

But the word was not spoken : a most unlooked-for and annoying interruption occurred. Horatio came up to them at that moment. What a bound of joy Daisy’s heart gave when she saw him approaching ! There was no polite salutation wasted between the young men : Horatio was angry that Daisy was with Mark, and Mark was angry that Horatio had come. Daisy drew her hand from Mark’s arm, and walked by Horatio, which was a specimen of poor taste that Mark could not account for.

“Come at the wrong time,” he said to the brother, with a half laugh, yet terribly in earnest.

“I came for my sister,” Horatio said, sharply.

Then the three walked on in silence until they reached the little drug store.

“Come in,” Mark said.

“No, thank you,” Horatio said.

“I’ll call round soon,” he said as they left him.

He stood looking after them, wondering why he had not asserted his rights, and gone on home with Daisy, instead of allowing her brother to triumph over him.

“Better luck next time,” he said to himself. “The course of true love don’t never run over smooth. She’s

on my side, and any one could see that his coming was a death-blow to her hopes."

"Daisy," Horatio said as they walked quietly on, "How came you to go there?"

"I don't know," beginning to cry.

"I don't believe you do. There! don't cry."

"I am not crying," turning her face away.

"You are. I don't mean to be cross, little sister, but I never was so much vexed in my life as when I got home and found that you'd gone up to Millard's. I came right after you. I want you to promise me, Daisy, you won't ever go again."

They were at the rectory gate.

"I promise," she said.

"And remember the promise when I am in Philadelphia," he said, as he kissed her.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Bap. Is he come ?

Bion. Why, no sir.

Bap. When will he be here ?”

—TAMING OF THE SHREW.

L AURA VAN PIKE'S wedding was to be strictly private, and all Newfield was disappointed. Every one had expected an invitation to attend, and half the rising generation had been on their good behavior for a week past, anticipating a reward in the bits of pastry fond mothers would smuggle home for them. Mr. Green had sold more yards of ribbon and coarse white swiss than had been sold in months before. And he had really sent to town for three old-ladies' caps, already made, and displayed them in his window to the great admiration of the old ladies of the village, who prudently decided to wait until the invitation came before they made the purchase. No invitations came ; the caps were a dead loss on Mr. Green's hands ; the rising generation entered into an open rebellion ; the coarse white swiss and bright ribbons were laid tearfully away by the fair purchasers.

Mr. Brentwell was to perform the ceremony, and Mrs. Brentwell, as a matter of course, had been invited to accompany him. Her best dress, a stiff black silk,

bought in the days of auld-lang-syne, was brought out in honor of the great occasion. Her daughters dressed her, and arranged her hair in the latest Newfield fashion—Newfield, having an independent nature, had fashions of its own—while she declared at intervals of five minutes, that she did wish that one of the girls could go in her place, which wish Lestie heartily echoed, providing that she should be the one to go.

At length she was ready. She was turned round and round, and looked at for the last time, and heard to say for the fiftieth time that she was sorry she was the one to go. The Van Pikes had sent their carriage for them; and the children stood at the door, and watched them get in and drive away as if they were starting out on a long journey.

When they were fairly gone, and the last cloud of dust had disappeared, Horatio went down to the doctor's office. Herbert and the two younger girls undertook the task of guarding Paul, which was not easy this afternoon. Daisy went to her own room, where she had a sad duty to perform. Thurston had made her a great many presents, and written her a few letters, during their engagement, and these must be packed this afternoon, to send to him. She had shrunk from doing it before; for it seemed as though it would be breaking the last cord that had bound them. It could all have been done in less than an hour, but she lingered sadly over it, and the afternoon was nearly gone when she tied the last parcel, and sat down on the edge of the

bed with them lying around her, trying to think how she would live now. She had not solved the difficult problem, when Horatio burst into the room.

“Is Paul here?” he cried.

“Paul! no. He’s down stairs.”

“No, he isn’t.”

“The girls had charge of him.”

“They can’t find him anywhere.”

“Then he’s run off,” she cried, forgetting the problem.

“Of course he has. I wish you had looked after him, instead of all this nonsense—”

“Why, Horatio, it had to be done.”

“It didn’t. Haven’t you seen anything of him?”

“Not since I came up stairs, when you went away. I thought Herbert and the girls were enough to take care of him.”

“Well, they weren’t, it seems; for he’s gone—to that den, I suppose. I tell you, Daisy, something must be done with that boy.” He closed the door and leaned against it. “He’ll never be any better while he’s in Newfield.”

“I know it, but where can he go?”

“I have an idea, and if father is willing, we’ll carry it out—”

“Well, what is it?” said Daisy, anxiously.

“It is to take him to Philadelphia with me in the fall. The doctor says there are excellent public schools there.”

"Yes, but Mrs.—but, you know, he couldn't live with you," said Daisy, hesitatingly, remembering where Horatio was to live. "His board would have to be paid somewhere."

"I know that, and I know too that if he stays in the village, he will be ruined, body and soul, and that father had better pay a hundred dollars a week board than allow that."

"I know."

"But this is my point: what it would cost to keep Paul and me at home, would pay his board in some private family."

"Perhaps it would," doubtfully.

"You know I shall have nothing to pay. Mrs. St. James—"

"Who is going after Paul?" she interrupted.

"Herbert and I."

"Then you had better hurry."

"I'm going now." He opened the door, then shutting it again, he added, gravely: "I want to talk with you this evening, Daisy. I think you are mistaken about the doctor—"

"Do go, Horatio."

"I'm going," lifting the latch. "Promise me."

"Promise what?"

"That you will listen."

"Maybe I will," she said, quietly. If she had been mistaken, if she could know the truth, and it would save from this parting that she felt she could not live

through, she would hear all that Horatio would say, she thought. She had found, this afternoon, that her love was greater than her resentment. "But go now," she added.

"I'm off," opening the door. "If father and mother are home before I am, just mention that plan to them, and talk it up."

"I will."

"Good-bye," and he was gone. She heard the sound of his steps, and his merry whistle, as he ran down the stairs. And then she was alone again with her thoughts.

An hour later, Christie came up.

"It is after six," she said, "and father and mother have not come home. What shall we do about tea?"

"Get it, I suppose. I'm coming down now to help you. Is Horatio home yet?"

"No : and he'll be hungry when he comes."

"I'll set the table," Daisy said, as they descended the stairs, "if you'll make the tea. Where is Lestie?"

"She is doing something to her blue silk."

"Oh, come here!" cried Lestie from the sitting-room. "See what I am doing" (displaying the skirt). "I'm putting a fold around the bottom. Jane Wade says that it's all the fashion, and that some of Laura Van Pike's are trimmed that way. Don't it look stylish?"

"It looks beautiful," said Daisy, admiringly.

"You might fix your brown one so. Why, there's

Herbert coming all alone ! I wonder where the others are. What do you want ?” she asked as he came in.

“ I want some supper just now. Oh ! the table ain’t even set.”

“ I’m setting it,” cried Daisy, hurrying on the cloth, “ Did you find Paul ?”

“ Well, yes : we found him. That is, we saw him on the river with Sam and those low fellows.”

“ Just as we feared,” said Daisy.

“ He ought to be whipped,” said Lestie, sewing vigorously.

“ What is Horatio going to do ?” asked Christie, coming from the kitchen.

“ He’s going to wait there awhile for him—do give me something to eat. I’m starving.”

“ Here’s a ginger cake,” said Daisy. “ What good will waiting do ?”

“ He can’t come home and leave him there,” returned Herbert, eating. “ And if they don’t come ashore in a little while, he’ll take a boat and go after ’em. Sam’s got somebody else’s boat and left his there, unlocked.

“ That is fortunate,” said Daisy. “ Is the tea boiled, Christie ?”

“ Almost.”

“ Just hurry it,” cried Herbert. “ Horatio said that you were not to wait for him. And father and mother will have all they want at Van Pike’s.”

“ Oh, I do think my new dress will look elegant !”

cried Lestie, holding it out at arms' length to see the effect.

"There they are now," said Herbert, who was standing by the window.

"Who?" cried his sisters.

"Father and mother. If that tea ain't boiled, I'll take another cake."

"Oh! I thought you meant Horatio and Paul," Daisy said, a little disappointed in her anxiety.

"The tea's ready," said Christie, "if you want any."

He needed no second invitation, but began his supper. Christie seated herself to pour out the tea.

"Oh, I'm so glad you're back, mother!" cried Lestie, as they entered. "Do tell me all about it. How was Laura dressed?"

"In white—why where's Paul?" looking around the room.

"Oh, mother! cried Christie, "Paul has run off."

"Run off!" echoed Mrs. Brentwell.

"White what, mother?" said Lestie, eagerly.

"Silk. Have you tried to find him?"

"Horatio went after him a long time ago," Daisy said.

"Don't any body else want any supper?" asked Herbert from the table.

"What was it trimmed with, mother?" continued Lestie.

"White lace. Why how could he get an opportunity to run off?"

“I don’t know, indeed,” said Christie. “Lestie thought he was with me, and I thought he was with her, and then we thought he was with Herbert in the garden or up stairs with Daisy.”

Mrs. Brentwell sighed heavily, and sat down in her rocking-chair. Mr. Brentwell said nothing. He was wrapt in deep thought.

“Who were the bridesmaids, mother?” Lestie persisted.

“There was only one, and I did not know her. I will tell you all about it presently. George, what are we to do?”

“Wife, I don’t know.”

“Horatio had a good idea,” Daisy said; and she told them of it.

“It is an excellent idea,” Mr. Brentwell said, when she had finished. “And we will act upon it.”

He drew his purse from his pocket. “This will help us a little,” taking a roll of bills from it.

“Oh, the wedding fee!” cried Lestie. “How much?”

“Fifty dollars,” Mr. Brentwell said, gleefully, “and it will do a great deal towards saving Paul.”

And they sat in the twilight, and talked it over just as Horatio had desired. The clock struck seven, and they did not come; eight, and still they were not there.

“It is strange they are not here,” Mrs. Brentwell said.

“I am afraid Horatio has got into trouble with

Lukens," Mr. Brentwell rejoined. "I think I will walk up that way and see if anything is wrong."

"And I will go with you," said Herbert.

"There is no knowing," said Lestie, as they went out, "what that horrid fellow might do to Horatio."

The table was still spread, with Horatio's supper on it, and a little for Paul. Lestie repeatedly declared that the latter did not deserve any.

They did not light a light, but sat in the dark, watching for their return. Mrs. Brentwell gave her daughters a description of the wedding, and before they realized how the time had flown the clock struck nine. Nine o'clock! and they had not come. They talked less after that, and were more anxious, and the time dragged. It seemed like two hours, and the clock struck ten. Yes, ten; they all counted the strokes, and then asked each other if that were true. Christie got up and felt the hands of the clock, as she did that night in March when they sat waiting for father. How long ago it seemed now!

The moon had risen, and, struggling through weary clouds, lighted the room for a moment with sad rays, and then hid its face again behind the inky curtains. The clock ticked on, louder, louder every second, the summer winds played among the branches of the tall trees, and no other sounds were heard. No one spoke, but they sat trembling and fearing yet hiding the fear from one another. Lestie was the first to break the long silence.

"Why don't they come, mother?" she said.

"They will be here presently," Mrs. Brentwell answered, trying to speak hopefully. Then there was silence again, while the clock ticked persistently on, and the breeze murmured among the trees.

"They are coming," Christie said, at length, "I hear footsteps."

"Yes," said Daisy, as they heard a quick light step rapidly approaching, "and Horatio is on ahead. I know his step. I suppose father is bringing Paul. Mother, he'll want something to eat."

"I was thinking of that," said Mrs. Brentwell. "I'll put the tea on right away." How light her heart was now, as she stirred the fire up and put the tea on to warm for Horatio!

The steps were nearer. Christie went out to the door to meet him. How long he was in coming! They must have heard his steps when he was a great way off. But he was in sight now; they could discern the figure. He was at the gate: he was coming in—he had passed by.

"Why, what makes him go past?" cried Christie.

"It was not Horatio after all," said Daisy, as she recognized Thurston's figure in the dim moonlight. No one else knew him: no one else loved him. They sat down again in silence and with sinking hearts. The clock ticked on, on, on, and then it struck eleven, loud and strong. At nine they were anxious, at ten they were troubled, and now it was eleven, and they were almost in despair.

There was sound of footsteps again. Now they were coming ! Quick, very quick ; some one was running. Nearer they came, nearer. Paul dashed through the gate, followed by a ragged boy. Their feet scarcely seemed to touch the ground as they ran, and they entered the sitting-room panting for breath.

Paul threw himself on the floor at Mrs. Brentwell's feet.

" Oh, mother ! mother ! " he cried, " mother ! mother ! "

" What is it, Paul ? " she cried, excitedly, trying to raise him up, while the ragged boy stood looking on.

" Mother ! mother ! " he cried again.

" You're a naughty boy," said Lestie, who on no occasion omitted to rebuke.

" Where are father and the boys ? " asked Christie.

" Oh, mother ! " cried Paul, again.

" Where are they, Paul ? " repeated Mrs. Brentwell.

" There, sit up, child, your father sha'n't whip you to-night, if that troubles you so much. "

" If he'd only kill me," screamed the child.

" Be after tellin'," said the ragged boy, " afore they bring the body sure. "

" The body ! " they cried.

" Who is it ? Tell us, boy," cried Mrs. Brentwell.

" An' sure an' I don't know his name, but it was the tall young man. "

" Horatio ! " almost screamed the mother, springing up, unmindful of Paul, who grasped her skirts.

“An’ that’s the name, mum,” coolly replied the boy.

She sank back, “Oh, my Heavenly Father, this is too much !” she moaned, clasping her hands.

The sisters screamed.

“Horatio is not dead,” cried Daisy, “it cannot be. Surely there is a mistake.”

“No, mum,” said the boy, growing bold, “that’s the name, sure, of the young man what is drowned.”

She turned almost fiercely upon him. “Why did you come here, you wretch, you wretch ! Go, and never let us see your wicked face again.”

He shrunk away from her, but lingered at the door, determined to see it out, and wishing from the depths of his small stony heart that they would come with the body ; and he listened for them.

“They’re coming,” he cried at length, in a relieved tone.

Daisy stopped in her walk about the room, and Lestie ran to the door to see them, while Christie cowered by her mother and Paul.

They were coming, but very slowly. Far away they heard the even tread of the heavy feet as they bore their burden on. It was a slight figure, but the cold hand of death had made it heavy to bear. And thus Horatio entered the home he had left so full of life and hope a few hours before.

They laid him on the settee and covered him, and

then the men who had brought him went silently out, and the ragged boy followed.

They were alone with their dead. The clock may have ticked on, and the breeze may have murmured in the trees ; but no one heeded.

“How did it occur?” Mrs. Brentwell asked, after a long time. Paul, who was sitting up now, told what he knew. Horatio, after waiting some time, had taken Sam’s old boat to go after them, and when Sam saw him coming, he ordered the fishing lines up, and they rowed rapidly down the stream, Horatio following. The race continued some time, and then they saw his boat was sinking. It leaked, they knew, though he could not have perceived it before in his eagerness to overtake them. He called out to them to rescue him, but Sam laughed a cruel laugh and rowed fiercely on. When Paul looked again, the boat had gone down, and Horatio was swimming for the shore. He was a good swimmer and the shore was near, so they did not apprehend any danger. But as they watched him, he sank suddenly from their sight and did not rise again. Then Sam turned his boat about and rowed swiftly to him, but it was too late ; he was gone. They thought that he must have been seized with a cramp ; for the water was cold and he must have been heated from the exercise of rowing. The boys, Paul foremost, dived into the water to find the body, but it was a long time before they were successful. They were thus employed when Mr. Brentwell and Herbert arrived there.

The bell of St Paul's tolled a midnight chime. The sleeping villagers awoke and counted the strokes. Twenty-one ! Who was dead ? They had known of no young person who was ill.

In the morning all Newfield knew that Horatio Brentwell was dead, drowned dead.

CHAPTER XXXV.

“Ah, wo to the heart of fond father and mother.

No sleep, naught but anguish and watching in sorrow.

Thou art clad in white robes in the garden of glory,

We are clad in the black robe of sorrow and mourning.”

FROM THE ARABIC.. . . SCRIBNER'S MONTHLY.

THAT night! That long night of death! But it would end, and the morning would dawn, and dawn as brightly as it did yesterday when Horatio awoke in health and life.

The grey light came from the east, and bathed the earth in beauty. The clouds that floated over the sky during the long night-watch were gone. The sun rose, and smiled its morning recognition to the earth, and beamed upon the flowers and trees, and the birds uprose to herald the coming with music. They took no note that death had walked abroad since that sun had bade them good night a few hours ago. They cared little that a heart that had been full of life and hope when the evening shadows gathered, had ceased to beat forever. The sun shone kindly down on the bosom of the river—as kindly as on the little rectory; the birds dipped into the blue waters and warbled a song in praise. The river flowed quietly on and gave no sign of the dark deed it had done.

All that night the family had remained by the body of the eldest-born. Paul lay on the floor, moaning and weeping. Mr. Brentwell sat at the foot of the settee with his face buried in his hands. No sound escaped his lips, and he gave no sign that he suffered. Daisy crouched on the floor by Horatio's head, holding one of the damp pulseless hands in her own life-warm grasp. Mrs. Brentwell sat in her old chair by the empty fireplace, and Christie sat on the floor at her feet, leaning her head against her knees. Lestie and Herbert, locked in one another's arms, lay on the floor, where they had wept themselves to sleep—and the eldest-born lay dead; there was no Horatio in time.

The table with his supper yet upon it, sat in the middle of the floor. There were white biscuits and fresh butter, cold fowl left from dinner, a few peaches, and his share of the wedding cake which Mrs. Van Pike had sent to the children. The teapot sat on the kitchen stove, where Mrs. Brentwell had put it last night when they thought they heard him coming—only the light had gone out of the few coals under it as it had gone out of her heart.

The sun crept slowly around to the window of the sitting-room, and threw its bright rays on the table and on the still figure on the settee. It waked Lestie and Herbert from their troubled sleep. Mr. Brentwell raised his head. It was their hour of morning prayer. He took the Bible and prayer-book from the stand beside him, but in a moment they fell from his trembling hands.

“Let us pray,” he said hoarsely.

They knelt. A long silence followed, while Mr. Brentwell essayed to open his lips in prayer. At last the words came—words he had thought he could never utter again.

“O, God!” he cried, clasping his hands, “Thy will be done.” That was all.

While they were yet on their knees, Dr. St. James came in at the door, which had remained open all night. Mr. Brentwell rose to greet him.

Daisy knew the step, and the kind “My friends,” and buried her face deeper in her hands as she knelt by Horatio. The rest of the family arose and shook hands with him, and then he came to her, and took one of her hands in his: only for a moment; for she did not return the clasp, and it fell to her side again as heavy and with as little life then as Horatio’s.

Thurston explained that he had been called to see Sam Lukens early that morning, and there he had heard the sad news from the boys who were in attendance.

“Was Sam hurt much?” Paul asked.

“Quite seriously, I think,” Thurston answered. “The boat struck him in the side when he was in the water, and broke two of his ribs.”

“I hope he will die,” Lestie cried.

“Lestie, my child,” Mrs. Brentwell said, rebukingly.

Thurston’s eyes turned to the kneeling figure, and

he thought of the weariness of her long vigil. She was sorrow stricken, and he longed to take her to his heart and comfort her, and be all to her that he had been in the days before, and all that Horatio had been, too. But it could not be. So he turned to Mrs. Brentwell, and spoke to her of his sympathy in their grief, and of his sorrow for the loss of his friend.

Mother Wade was sent for, and then Mrs. Brentwell retired to her room, and the three sisters went up stairs. When Daisy reached her room, walking like one in a dreadful dream, she saw that Horatio's door stood open, revealing the little white bed. Some books were lying carelessly on it, where he had thrown them yesterday, when he came from the doctor's office ; and on the table were others, which Thurston had given him a few days before. These were books that he had been wanting a long time, and when they came there was no time to read them, and only yesterday at breakfast, he had said that he would rise an hour earlier every morning and gain the time in that way ; and his mother had said that he was working too hard now, and that instead of taking less rest he should take more. So he had taken more, he was taking it now, lying so quietly, resting supremely, with the books unread ; and even the fond mother will never fear again that he is weary. He has read the last page and closed the last book. Time will roll on ; new books will be written ; men of earth will gain more knowledge ; but Horatio will open no more books ; his knowledge is full and complete.

Daisy stood by the bed. How she came there, she scarcely knew ; for she had not intended to enter ; she had thought but the moment before that she would never go in there again. But there she was, looking on the old familiar furniture—furniture she had known from her childhood. How strange it looked to-day ! Death seemed written on the face of everything.

She must have stood there a long time when Christie came in.

“Daisy, dear sister, don’t stay here,” she said. “I thought you were lying down.”

“Lying down !” she repeated, scarcely heeding her.

“Come—O, Daisy ! Daisy !” she threw her arms around her.

“Are you crying, Christie ?” Daisy said, quietly. “I don’t. See !” But Christie still wept as she raised her face.

“Come, lie down,” she said, forgetting herself again. Daisy obeyed her mechanically.

“Who is down stairs ?” she asked, as Christie stood by the bed.

“Mother Wade has come. The doctor and Silas are there, and the neighbors are coming in and out. And Daisy,” she went on, softly, “they have laid him out in the parlor, and—and the funeral is to be to-morrow.”

“To-morrow !” cried Daisy. “So soon, so soon.”

“They think it is better,” Christie only said.

“To-morrow, to-morrow,” Daisy murmured, turn-

ing on her pillow. Herbert came at that moment to call Christie. She was needed down stairs; mother could not be up, and some one must be there. So Christie went. And from that time through the whole long day she was kept busy: there was not a moment to rest, not a moment for her to think of her own grief. Here her little feet trod, and there, assisting in all of the last sad duties, seeing every one, talking to the curious villagers who came, and shielding her parents from their ill-timed questions and poorly shown kindness. Silas and Herbert were by her, and gave her what assistance they could, but every moment she missed the one who, had another been dead, would have taken this burden on his own strong shoulders and shielded her. Sometimes almost forgetting why the anguish was, only remembering that there was anguish, she would think she heard his step, or his voice speaking to some one, or would wonder why he did not come—that the world was not the world without him; then she would remember why he came not: that he lay dead in the parlor, that she would never hear his voice again, that his step would never sound upon the doorway or on the porch. And sometimes she would stop and almost wonder if it were only yesterday, or years and years ago, that father and mother had gone to the wedding, and they had watched them depart, and Horatio had gone merrily down the street. It seemed as if it had happened long ago in her childhood and that she was old now.

That long day came to an end, the night shadows

fell over the rectory, and there was perfect quietness there. The busy feet that had tramped heedlessly in all day had ceased. The last curious one had looked on the calm young face and gone away sorrowing, and the broken family sat down alone together.

The funeral was to meet at the rectory at half past two the next afternoon, and at the church at three o'clock.

The neighbors brought in mourning garments for the mother and sisters. Daisy, arrayed in Mrs. Scott's most stylish robes, stood by the window of her room that afternoon, watching the people as they came. Men kept guard by the door, and walked slowly up and down the path. Women talked in low tones and shook their heads solemnly.

The Rev. Mr. Hawkins, of Fairhope, officiated at the funeral. To him it was only some one who had to be buried, one of the many funerals he had expected to attend when he entered the ministry. His wife kept a list of them, and of the marriages he performed, so that he would know, when he was an old man, just what work he had done. And he put it down in his Parish Register, and it would swell the number at the Conventional report. But, taking funerals as a whole, there were few he enjoyed as he did this. There had been a carriage sent for him, and he had brought his wife and three noisy children with him, that they might enjoy the ride. And then he always had been anxious for Mr. Brentwell to hear him preach. So he selected his

sermon with great care, and hurled it at the head of the afflicted father, who, poor man, heard not a word. But Mr. Hawkins, watching him closely, imagined that the fixed look of almost despair, was intense interest, and mentioned that fact to his wife on their drive home. And she told him of the many she saw who were greatly interested, who never took their eyes off him.

Then he confided to her that he would stand a pretty good chance of being called to St. Paul's if Mr. Brentwell should leave, and she thought they would want to leave now ; and they both talked of the large salary that was given there, and the small one given at Fairhope.

So they buried him in the church-yard, just in sight of his own chamber window. And as they laid him in the grave, the white curtains burst their cords, and seemed playing in the wind, to wave a sad farewell.

The last words were spoken, the last person gone, and the clergyman and his family went back to their home. And oh, the dreariness of that home ! Yet people will live, and people have appetites though the heaviest of sorrow come. So mourning, penitent Paul was hungry and wanted his dinner. Mrs. Brentwell hastened to prepare it, while Christie set the table, bringing out the pile of eight plates, and was putting them around in their old places, when Lestie cried out,

“ Christie, there are only seven ! ”

Seven, only seven ! and there would never again be eight. There was a vacant place by Lestie, an empty chair against the wall, a solitary plate on the shelf.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

"The old man has played out his part in the scene,
Wherever he now is, I hope he's more clean.
Yet give us a thought free of scoffing or ban
To that Dirty Old House and that Dirty Old Man."

—WILLIAM ALLINGHAM.

A SMALL boy opened the rectory gate, and ran up the walk. He stopped on the porch, and looked at the door, uncertain whether he had the courage or not. But there was no alternative ; knock he must, so knock he did.

Paul answered the summons.

"Yer par in ?" asked the boy.

"Hello, you Simpkins ! You needn't be coming here ; I'm a good boy now, and I ain't going to have another thing to do with any of your gang."

"I've come for your par," said Simpkins, meekly.

"My father ! you needn't be thinking he'll talk to the likes o' you. So go on. We don't allow naughty boys in our yard."

"I want to see your par. Sam sent for him."

"Sam Lukens ? He killed my brother."

"'Twas your own fault," growing bolder.

"You'll be kicked out if you say much," cried Paul.

"I want to see your par," with determination and

boldness combined. "Sam's a-dyin', and the woman wants him right off."

"You get out!" incredulously. "He's drunk."

"No; he ain't; he's a-dyin' on the bed, and his mammy's settin' by him a-cryin'."

"Who knew he had a mother?" said Paul, doubtfully.

"He did," said Simpkins, practically.

Herbert appeared at that moment, and inquired into the conversation.

"There ain't any truth to it," Paul said, when Simpkins had told his story.

"It's Bible truth," said Simpkins. "Hope to die if it ain't." As all things must be credited after that awful hope, Herbert said:

"Well, father will come."

"Sure?" said the boy, backing down the steps.

"Of course," with dignity; and the door shut after him.

"Can I go, father?" Paul said, as Mr. Brentwell was preparing to leave the house.

"I do not think it would be best, my son," he said, kindly, and Paul said no more.

He was trying to be a better child. His brother's death had changed him greatly. It had brought him, young as he was, to realize what a downward path he had been treading. And though he looked upon Sam as Horatio's murderer, as did every one, yet he felt that he had been altogether to blame himself.

Mr. Brentwell walked quickly up the road to Sam's hut. The door was closed, which plainly indicated that that gentleman was not receiving common callers that day. The clergyman knocked softly upon it. Feeble hands from within tried to pull it open, but were unsuccessful.

"Come in," said a woman's voice at length, "I cannot open it."

It required all Mr. Brentwell's strength to do so ; for the hinges were rusty from little use. Sam's door had never been shut by day or night in warm weather. The room appeared very dark to Mr. Brentwell's eyes, when he first entered, and he did not immediately recognize the black-robed woman who stood waiting.

She held out her hand to him.

"I was afraid you would not come," she said, "and I wanted you to see my poor boy before he dies. My boy ! my boy !"

"Mrs. Lorraine," Mr. Brentwell said in great surprise, "is it possible that you are this man's mother ?"

"Yes, I am his mother, and he is my only boy," she said, weeping, as she led him to the corner, where Sam lay on a bundle of straw.

"Has it come to this, my poor fellow ?" Mr. Brentwell said as he bent over him.

"Yes," he growled, "and mighty glad you are of it. It'll be a high day in Newfield, when I'm stowed away under the ground."

"Don't talk that way, Sammy ; you break my heart," wept the mother.

“I did that long enough ago,” he muttered.

“Oh, no ; that’s all over now,” (she sat down by him and took his hand,) “and you’re to be my boy again, and take care of me and cheer my old days.”

Sam turned to Mr. Brentwell. “*She* wanted you,” he said fiercely, “I didn’t. I didn’t want your face around here. I know what you come for ; it’s about that boy of yours. Well, I’m her boy and he was yours ; what’s the difference, I’d like to know ?”

“My good man—”

“I know all you’ve got to say. I have had it drummed into my ears enough. I’ll hear no more. You came about that boy of yours, did you ? Settle it the best you can. You see I’m dying ; what more can you get out of me ?”

“Oh, Sammy, Sammy, my boy, my boy !” moaned Mrs. Lorraine, kissing his horny hand.

“I see that you are dying—” began Mr. Brentwell.

“Well, what more ? A life for a life, ain’t it ? You say I killed your boy—”

“I do not say you killed my boy.”

“Humph !” sneered Sam, “where a man’s dying, it’s no time to lie.”

“No ; my friend, it is not ; this is a solemn hour ; all eternity depends upon it.”

“Eternity ! Don’t be canting to me. I won’t hear it. If I’d never heard a word of cant, I’d have been a better man. She’ll tell you that ; she’ll tell you how it all

begun. They took me when I was a boy, and canted at me from morning till night."

"Oh no, Sammy."

"Yes ; and you know it ; and you joined 'em."

"I was so anxious for your soul, Sammy."

"My soul ! That's a good joke ! Where's my soul going now ? You know well."

"Your soul need not be eternally lost," Mr. Brentwell said. "It will not be if you trust in the Saviour who died for you. He stands waiting, with forgiveness on His lips, and in His heart. Turn to Him, and cast yourself into His arms."

"If they had talked that way to me, I'd 'ave been better," Sam said more quietly. "But they only told me that I'd be lost forever. They got a revival up at Fairhope one winter, and all the parsons and deacons for miles around came to have a finger in the pie. They were going to convert every body right off. There was one man talked to me a whole fortnight about the evil of my ways, but I didn't see that they were a bit more evil than his were. I was a steady, industrious boy, and minded my mother ; didn't I, mother ?"

"Yes, that you did, Sammy. You were a steady boy," Mrs. Lorraine answered tenderly.

"I never cheated or told lies, and that is more than he could say ; for he cheated and lied all day long at his store. If that is your religion I don't want any of it."

"It is not religion. But we will not talk of the past : the present is all we can attend to. The Saviour

in His great love, forgives all that is gone, and invites—”

“Love! much love I heard: it was fire and brimstone. They told me of God’s anger, and I should be lost forever,” Lukens went on excitedly. He was sinking fast.

“They frightened me so one night that I went up to be prayed for. Then you ought to have heard them. Deacon Jones, who had cheated his mother out of all her money, give it to me hot and heavy, making believe he was praying. He told the Lord I was the biggest rascal in the town, and advised Him to deal with me accordingly—”

“My good man,” Mr. Brentwell interrupted.

“Hear me out,” cried Sam. “They got them all up at the point of the bayonet, and then talked about ‘winning souls,’ and what a blessed season they’d had, and how the Lord was in their midst. It was the devil in their midst! He entered my heart then and has had possession ever since. And I’m going to spend eternity with him.” He ended with a feeble groan.

“The Saviour waits to receive you, if you will but turn to Him at this last moment.”

“There is no mercy for me. I’m lost, I’m lost.”

“Oh Sammy, Sammy,” Mrs. Lorraine moaned.

“‘Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool,’” said Mr. Brentwell.

"That is not for me," cried Sam. "I am lost."

"Oh pray for him," wept Mrs. Lorraine.

"Pray for me! *no*, he shall not. *He* pray for me when I ruined his boy, his Paul—"

"Thank God! you did not," said Mr. Brentwell, quietly. "You have but a few moments on earth, Lukens," he added, "let us spend them in preparing you to meet your Judge."

"It is too late," he answered in the same hardened voice, while he failed visibly.

"It is never too late: remember the dying thief."

"He wanted to repent: I don't." Truly the Spirit of God had left this man.

"Oh Sammy, dear Sammy! turn unto the Lord and be saved." Mrs. Lorraine knelt by him with clasped hands, and streaming eyes. Mr. Brentwell knelt to pray, but Sam rudely called out,

"None of that. You may go now."

"I cannot leave you while you are in this condition."

"Then you will stay with me for all eternity. Mother, I am dying! dying! Curse 'em all, I say! I'm dying," he gasped. "I'm lost—lost—" He started up with almost a howl, and sank back dead. As they gazed silently upon the distorted features, Mr. Brentwell remembered the peace that was written on the face of his eldest born, and thanked God. And he saw then that the Chastening Hand had dealt tenderly with him. Then he turned to Mrs. Lorraine.

“My friend,” he said, taking her hand ; but she interrupted him.

“This is more than I can bear,” she cried, wildly. “Through my whole life I have had sorrow, but never like this. I have hoped and prayed since the day he left me that he would come back to me a changed man. See ! how God has answered my prayer.”

“Let us pray,” Mr. Brentwell said.

She was quieter when he was done praying, and begged to be left alone with her dead. “Send some one to me at evening,” she said. “I cannot see any one before.”

He related the death-bed scene to them at home, and told them of the mother. Paul, sitting on his knee, listened and trembled. And that night when they gathered around the family altar, they thanked Him who doeth all things well, that Horatio was at rest in the Saviour’s arms.

The following morning Sam was buried by the river shore. Mr. and Mrs. Brentwell, Paul and Christie, the doctor and the old mother, were the only persons present.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

IT was a chilly day in the latter part of September. There had been rain all of the previous week, but this morning the sun shone out again. The earth welcomed her old friend, and every one in Newfield told every one else that it had cleared off, and that there would be pleasant weather.

Mr. Millard had planned a visit to the city in the beginning of the week, and he knew that that was the sole reason it had rained. The wonder was that it did clear off at all. But as it did clear off this September morning, Mr. Millard started for the city, leaving his son in charge of the tiny drug store for that day. This responsibility so increased Mark's importance that he was quite above speaking to his mother on ordinary topics when he went to his dinner, but ate in dignity and silence, and to further show his authority, he closed the store in the afternoon. Then he donned his best necktie, brushed his old silk hat until it was new, and went out. He walked promptly up the street swinging his father's cane, cutting all old acquaintances who were not swinging canes, or were not proprietors of some establishment, if said establishment were only an apple stand. When he had walked as far as the quiet

little rectory, he stood at the gate surveying the house as though he were determining whether he would or would not honor the inmates with a call. At length he determined to do so, which was not at all surprising, considering he had made up his mind to the call, early in the morning, and thought of it ever since.

He came fully prepared to conquer, having composed several impressive remarks, the gist of which were taken from his mother's old Shakespeare. Lestie, looking out of the window, and seeing him walk up slowly to the door, cried out,

"Oh, there's Mark Millard! I'm going up stairs," and went hastily out of the room.

Mrs. Brentwell admitted him, and expressed some surprise in a quiet way, that he was at liberty to call at that time of the day.

"Oh," he said, with a wave of his hand—a sure indication of grandeur—seating himself, "Oh, I am my own master, as you may say, my own master. And liberty, as you may say, is sweet. At early dawn it entered my father's paternal head to visit the city, as you may say, leaving me monarch of all I survey. So I took the opportunity to call and condole with you for your late affliction."

"Is the store shut?" asked Paul, who was manufacturing a patent winding machine for Daisy's zephyr.

"It am," with a kingly air.

"What would any one do if they wanted some medicine?" Paul continued.

“Wait till to-morrow. I make it a rule,” addressing Mrs. Brentwell, “never to do to-day what could be put off until to-morrow, and I find it a pretty good rule,” forgetting Shakespeare, and relaxing into slang, “it carries a fellow along mighty easy. I thought,” turning to Daisy, “that you might be wanting to take a walk this afternoon. If so, I’m at your service.”

“Thank you,” Daisy said, “but—”

“Oh,” cried Paul, “she can put it off until to-morrow or some other day, so there’s no use of her going to-day.”

“I was speaking of duties,” Mark said, with grandeur. “Duties lie here, and pleasures there,” showing their exact positions on the extremities of his father’s cane. “Pleasures, you see, resting on the head of the cane, come before duties. So Miss Daisy, I am at your service if you wish the *pleasure* of a stroll.”

“Thank you,” Daisy said, “but I do not wish it.”

“The river bank is too damp from the recent rain,” Mrs. Brentwell said, coming to her daughter’s aid.

“Oh, we can choose another path,” Mark said obligingly, forgetting his grandeur again, “It’s all one to me ; one’s as good as t’other—”

Lestie bounded into the room and interrupted him, “Oh, mother,” she cried, barely recognizing Mark, “here’s Mr. Rundel with two bags of apples ! Where’ll he put ’em ?”

An old weather-beaten farmer followed her. “Good

afternoon, Mis' Brentwell an' young ladies," he said. "I've fetcht you a handful of apples to cheer you up."

Mrs. Brentwell thanked him as she arose to greet him. "Sit down with us a little while," she said.

"Thank you ; I will. You see," he continued, when he was introduced to Mark, "we were talking o' you at home. Daisy there don't look as chirp as she did in the airy summer, and them black dresses don't add none ; an' my woman she's worrying about her, an' about you all. You hain't no idee, Mis' Brentwell, what store she sets by you folks. She keeps crying over Horatio. 'Pa,' says she, 'I couldn't have felt worse if he'd been my own.' No more she could. And it's jes' so with every one in Newfield." He drew his rough sleeve over his moist eyes. Paul burst into tears, and Lestie fled weeping from the room.

"I didn't come here to make you cry," he continued, looking around on the wet eyes ; "I came to bring you a handful of airy apples. And my woman she sent her love along with 'em, and says they're mighty cheerin' apples. Paul, they're settin' in the porch. Jes' run and get one for your mother ; that's a good boy. Everybody's a-talkin'," he said, as Paul left the room, "about the goodness of that boy. The Lord is free with his mercies, Mis' Brentwell. He's given you a son in the place of the one He borrowed for a spell."

"Well," said Mark, rising, "I'll be making tracks for home. I'll drop in again, when you're more lonely.

Good day, all hands." And he departed, grandeur, necktie and cane.

"An' so that's the new young man," Mr. Rundel said, "wal, he ain't accordin' to my likin'."

"Nor to ours," said Mrs. Brentwell.

Paul brought enough apples in to supply the family, which were eaten and praised, and while they were yet enjoying them, Mr. Brentwell entered with an open letter in his hand.

"I have good news here," when he had greeted the farmer. "I have a letter from Mr. Borne, and he tells me how he has been getting along since he left Newfield."

"I hope he's been having easier times than he had here," said Mr. Rundel.

"He was called to a small place in New Jersey," Mr. Brentwell continued, "and for a few months did well. Then some difficulty arose among the female members, which led to his resignation. The clergyman, who had charge of the church in that place, called upon him, and in their conversation spoke of our church government, and in a way that led Mr. Borne to look into the subject, and, after a thorough looking, he applied for Holy Orders, and is to be ordained at Christmas. Meantime, the church people of the place support him."

"I'm glad of that news," said Mr. Rundel, heartily, "Maybe he wouldn't object to a present from an old friend." He drew a large wallet from his pocket, and

taking a roll of bank notes from it, gave them to Mr. Brentwell.

“This will be very acceptable,” said that gentleman, “and I will send it immediately.”

“I mustn’t forget the biggest part of my errand,” said Mr. Rundel, as he rose to take his leave, some time after. “My woman wants Daisy to come out to spend the hull day, some day next week.”

“Thank you,” said Daisy, “I will surely come.”

“Wal, what day? So ’s ’t I kin hitch up an’ come down for you.”

“You needn’t take that trouble. It is only a mile, and I can easily walk that. I will come the first day my cloak is done,” she said, smiling; “for I have nothing to wear before.”

“Wal,” he said, not so well pleased; “but I’ll bring ye home.”

“That will do. Tell Mrs. Rundel to expect me about the middle of the week,” Daisy said, as he went out.

The cloak was finished by the following Tuesday, and that day dawned bright and pleasant. Daisy set out to visit her old friend, Mrs. Rundel. Paul, who was permitted now to attend school, walked with her as far as the academy.

She met Thurston at Miss Amelia’s house. He bowed in his gentlemanly way, and passed on, but she returned the recognition coolly, looking the other way, to the great delight of the owner of a pair of large dark

eyes which were peering through the blinds of an upper window of the house.

The day had dawned as brightly on farmer Rundel as on Daisy. And to him it was just *the day* to take that load of grain to market.

“There’s no knowin’ when we may have another sich a day, ’ma,” he said to his wife, “or how long the roads ’ll stay settled.”

“You’ll want to see Daisy if she comes,” Mrs. Rundel said, as he stood ready to depart.

“’Tain’t likely she’ll come to-day. She said she wouldn’t be here afore the middle o’ the week—Wednesday or Thursday, most likely. Anyway,” he said, as he went out of the door, “I’ll be home long afore night. But if she should come, jes’ do your best to cheer that pale face o’ hern.”

Two hours later “that pale face,” appeared at the wide open kitchen door. Mrs. Rundel was a little surprised to see it, but very glad, and immediately began to “cheer” it, which proved no easy task; for there was a great sadness over it. Her kind busy tongue ran on through the long day. Daisy listened, replied and smiled too when the proper smiling time came, but there was the sadness left. Still there was a quiet enjoyment in it all, and Daisy felt a contentment and peace that she had not known in many days.

As the day wore on the sun, that rose with such fair promise, was overcast with clouds, which gave appearance of rain. Daisy, looking out, saw their

threatening appearance and said she must go home before the rain came, but Mrs. Rundel, certain that "'pa" would soon be there, and would take her home in his covered wagon, persuaded her to wait for him. The time wore on ; supper was over and it was growing dark. Mr. Rundel had not come, and Daisy must go, hoping that she would have time to reach home before it rained. Mrs. Rundel again urged her to remain, but Daisy repenting that she had waited so long already, started off.

It was beginning to rain a little, and she walked swiftly on. It was a lonely road at night, and Daisy was not brave. It was so bright and pleasant in the morning that she lingered on her way, but to-night, in the dreariness, every tree frightened her ; every clump of bushes was a crouching monster, preparing to spring upon her. First she was sorry she had waited so long, then she was sorry she had not waited longer. Perhaps Mr. Rundel had already returned, or she might have accepted the invitation to remain all night—they would not be alarmed at home, surely, if she did not come in this storm : they would not expect her to-night. Perhaps even now it was not too late to return. She stopped a moment to consider. There were no landmarks to be seen in the darkness by which she could tell how far she had gone. It seemed as though she had been on the journey a long time, and yet she was a long way off from home. She looked behind her, but the road was very dark, and she remembered all that had

frightened her as she came along, and she dared not return, so she plodded on toward the village.

She thought of them at home, and pictured to herself the little group around the table in the sitting-room. Mother and the girls were sewing, father was reading and the boys were studying. Lestie was telling of some wonderful bit of news that she had heard, and if it were ill news, Christie was hoping that it was not true. And Paul, looking up from his book, would corroborate or contradict, according to the version he had heard. Herbert would ask if all those apples were gone, go down the cellar and find for himself that they were not, and bring a dishful up for them all to eat. And as they ate, they would talk of her, may be, thinking her safe.

There were very few houses between farmer Rundel's and the village, and those few were built far back from the road, and in the storm to-night seemed closed so tight that not a ray of light came through the windows. So Daisy, seeing no signs of the light or of the houses, could form no idea how far she had gone. She leaned against the fence, weary and disheartened. She could never reach home, she thought, the road lengthened at every step. She remembered a story Horatio used to tell them, when they were children, of an enchanted princess who was trying to get to her father's palace, and for every step she took the palace receded two, until at length, she turned in despair and went the other way and met the palace on the other side of the world. The village seemed so far away that Daisy

began to think it, too, must be receding, and that she would reach it sooner by going around by China and entering on the north side. While she stood there, thinking of it, she heard the sound of a horse and carriage approaching. For a moment she thought that it might be Mr. Rundel ; that he had reached home and, finding that she had gone on alone, had followed her, and would take her safely home at last. But no : that could not be ; for this which was approaching was a carriage, and the farmer's lightest wagon was the lumbering vehicle that went to market twice a week and brought the family and neighbors to church on Sunday. It was coming nearer, who ever it was. She saw the dim figure in the darkness, and was uncertain whether to hide or stand out in bold relief. Perhaps it was some one she knew ; some one who would take her home.

The doctor ! the thought flashed across her mind. Who but he would be out this stormy night ? This decided her : she would hide. She would rather stay in that road all night than let him take her home. She turned to find a hiding-place, but, catching her foot in the undergrowth, fell to the ground. The carriage, which was beside her now, stopped. A man got out of it and came to her.

“Are you hurt, my good woman ?” a well known voice said, as he helped her to her feet again.

“Oh, Mr. Van Pike !” she cried. He seemed like an angel of light to her then.

“Daisy Brentwell!” he cried, in his turn. “Why, is this you? How came you here?”

She told him in a few words.

“Well, your troubles are over now,” he said, smiling; “for I will take you home.”

In a few moments they reached Newfield, and Daisy found that she had not been over a dozen rods from Mrs. Barker’s house.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Hor.—Sir, a word ere you go ;—

Are you a suitor to the maid you talk of, yes or no ?

Tra.—And if I be, sir, is it any offence ?

Gre.—No ; if without more words you will get you hence.

Tra.—Why, sir, I pray, are not the streets as free
For me as for you ?

Gre.... —But so is not she."

—TAMING OF THE SHREW.

THEY were waiting for her at home, sitting around the table, eating the apples, just as she had imagined, and were glad when she came.

She sank exhausted upon the lounge. They questioned her anxiously, but she only knew that she was faint and cold and tired, leaving Mr. Van Pike to tell what he knew of her adventures. They carried her up stairs and laid her in the bed she thought of during the walk, and wondered if she would ever lie in again.

She had caught a severe cold, and lay there shivering, with the quilts of the house piled upon her. Mrs. Brentwell talked of sending for the doctor. After a while she slept a little ; then waking she listened to the howling of the wind and the beating of the rain, and thought of the dark road, and that it was just as dark now as it was then, and she would wonder how she reached home. Then she looked around the softly lighted room and saw her mother sitting near her, and tried to feel that it was

reality, that she was not still fighting with the cruel storm, but she was cold yet, and wondered if she would ever be warm again. And sinking again into a half slumber, she made a vow that she would never, never go to see Mrs. Rundel again.

Then she slept, it seemed a long time. She woke suddenly, and thought of Horatio lying out in the cold alone. The rain beat on his grave, and the wind played roughly with the little rose-bush Christie had planted there. She tried to think why he did not get up and come in, what kept him there ; but she could not, so she would go out and see ; for he must not lie there alone.

She sprang up and was at the door, when her mother, who had lain down beside her, awoke.

“Daisy,” she cried, getting up quickly, “where are you going?”

“After Horatio,” she answered wildly ; “he’s out all alone in the rain. Let me go,” as her mother held her back. “I must go. It is *Horatio*. Don’t you remember Horatio? He is my brother, and I must go to him.”

“Poor child, you may go soon,” Mrs. Brentwell said, sadly, as she lifted her in her strong arms, and laid her in her bed again.

“I’m going now,” Daisy murmured, but weary and exhausted, making no resistance.

Herbert and Mr. Brentwell were called, and they decided that the doctor must see her ; she might be very ill. A few minutes later a strange figure ran through the

midnight streets. It was Herbert going for Thurston, wrapt in his mother's water-proof cloak, with the hood over his head.

The doctor returned with him, and was taken immediately to Daisy's room, where she lay, calling faintly though wildly for Horatio. She had a high fever and was delirious, but he did not apprehend anything serious; she would soon be well, he said.

She was better the next morning, and knew him when he came, and answered his "good morning."

She was able to sit up in a few days, but was still far from being strong. And she looked so fragile in her quilted black wrapper, sitting in a great arm chair by the bed, that Thurston feared when he saw her that it would be a long time before she was entirely well.

Her cheeks flushed a little when he sat by her, and took her wrist to feel the pulse, and she spoke in a trembling voice. She seemed to have forgotten her old anger toward him, or grown indifferent—he feared the latter.

"I'm stronger to-day," she said.

"A little," he said, doubtfully.

"I shall soon be going out," she went on, feeling that she must talk.

"It will be a long time before you will be strong enough to take a long walk," he said; then, as it reminded him of the days past and of the long morning drives that would never come again, he regretted he had said it. Just now the gulf between them seemed so

wide to him. When she was angry with him and refused to speak, he had hoped that when that was over she would return to him : he had not dreamed indifference possible. He did not consider that she was but a woman, and that she could do nothing else, that her weak hands were tied with strong cords. But Daisy considered, and Daisy knew it, and with an aching heart turned her eyes from the handsome face that she loved so well and that bent so near to her then.

“You don’t know how strong I am,” she said, after a long awkward pause, when the doctor had counted the beating of her pulse four separate times, and laid the hand back in her lap. “The children are planning an excursion for wild grapes, and I want to go with them.”

“I hope I shall be consulted,” he said, lightly. Christie came into the room at that moment, to their great relief, and shortly after, he went away.

That was on Wednesday, and he did not come again until the next Sunday evening. He had been busy all the day, and came as Paul, the last of the family, was starting for service. The child expressed his pleasure that he had come ; for now Daisy would not be left alone : would the doctor stay and take care of her ? Thurston gravely said “yes,” and Paul to all appearance relieved of much anxiety, ran out of the house, bounded over the nearest stile and, going reverently into the church, took his seat among the good boys.

Thurston, with all medical dignity seated himself by his patient, and counted her pulse one long minute by

his gold repeater, as anxiously and quietly as if her life depended upon the issue. How much she thought of that minute ! Lestie had told her only yesterday that everybody was saying he never paid Mrs. Scott the least attention now, and that there were many in the village who would not be in the least surprised if she sometime married Mr. Green, that she certainly gave him a great deal of encouragement. Daisy's eyes had been opened, and she saw now that it had been idle gossip and her own jealous imagination and not his unfaithfulness that had been the cause of their parting.

“ Your pulse is rather quick to-night,” he said, when the long minute was up, wondering if his coming had quickened it ; “ but you have no fever.”

Of course she had had none for a week, and he knew it well, and so did she. He talked of her medicine, and asked after her cough. Then they talked of other trivial things, talked because silence was painful ; but they had little interest in what they said, and the conversation soon died out. Thurston sat looking on the floor, and then at her face, wondering all the time then deciding suddenly as was his wont that this suspense should end. He left his chair and walked up and down the room, while she sat quietly and watched, knowing, with a true womanly intuition, what a storm raged in that heart, and what must follow soon. He came to her at length.

“ Daisy,” he began, but there came a loud knocking

at the door—an imperative knocking: some one had come who was determined to enter.

Daisy, disappointed and almost heart-sick, rose quickly—so quickly in her excitement, that Thurston imagined she looked relieved.

“Must you answer it?” he said, scarcely knowing what he said.

“Why, certainly,” smiling faintly. If he only would tell her not to!

“Then allow me to go: you must not breathe the night air. If it is any one to see your father,” he added with a hope that it might be, “I will say that he is to be seen at the church.”

But it was *not* any one to see the father, but some one to see the daughter, and the daughter alone—not Dr. St. James, too; and this very remarkable individual was Mark Millard.

He was bowing and smiling as he entered the sitting-room, and the doctor was following him, and frowning. Daisy, ready to cry at his coming and to laugh at his comical appearance in his flashy garments, greeted him with marked coolness. But he, not heeding this, seated himself, without invitation, and began to talk, and not only began, but kept it up. The replies he received were few indeed and far between—it was not every one who was able to answer or appreciate the wisdom of his conversation. Thurston and Daisy certainly were not able at that time.

Thurston sat dignified and silent, waiting for him to

go, and torturing himself with the idea that Daisy looked pleased and entertained. In the old days of his confident manly love, he had feared nothing ; there had been no rivals, and he was too thoroughly a man to imagine a refusal possible.

As they thus sat there, Mark talking largely with a view of impressing Daisy with a sense of his wealth and greatness and subduing the doctor—which he imagined he had been quite successful in doing ; Daisy anxious, wondering what Thurston would have said, tormented by Mark, wishing he would go, which she knew he would not ; Thurston jealous with a jealousy he had never known before—there came the sound of a child's feet on the gravel walk, then on the porch. Two hearts hoped that service was over and Paul was returning. Then came the owner of the feet, knocking, as Paul never would have done. Daisy again rose to answer it, and Thurston again detained her.

“Allow me to be door-keeper to-night,” he said, going out. She did not return to her seat, but stood listening, hoping to hear Paul's voice, though the hope was founded only on her desire. It was a boy who had come ; some one was sick, dying perhaps, and the doctor was wanted immediately. She went into the entry when she heard that, forgetting Mark and good manners alike.

“Are you going ?” she said, as the boy ran off.

“I must,” Thurston returned, taking his hat. He stopped a moment by the door, not heeding that the

night air blew strong upon her. "I had intended to remain until they came from church," he said, in a low voice, then, remembering that he had no right to come between her and another, he added "good-night," hastily, and went out, pulling the door shut after him.

"That man seems to have a great deal o' practice," Mark observed in an off-hand manner as Daisy, duty bound, returned to the sitting-room. "Now for my part, I haven't any faith in him; he don't know two things; he's bounded. The old man and I were talking it up the other day, and I've about made up my mind to send to the city for a doctor who knows B from a bull's foot. Yes, I think I shall do so."

"It would not be of any use; for no one in Newfield would have any physician but Doctor St. James," Daisy said with spirit, then remembering that Thurston did not need and could not desire her defence, she said no more.

"All that may be, but between me and you, Newfield, taken as a whole, ain't over bright. The villagers are well enough as far as they go, but they can't go far; for they hain't no brains to go with. It's a blessing that we've moved in the place. Folks of our expectations and learning ain't to be sneezed at." Here he kindly paused to allow Daisy to digest what he had said, but instead of digesting, she looked at the clock to see how long it might be before service was over. Twenty minutes at the least! Could she endure it?

Meantime Mark edged his chair closer.

“Now, there’s the store,” he went on; “there ain’t a place in town that’s doing the business that I do there. What more could a fellow offer a girl? There it is in plain sight. What’s a doctor’s practice? A few aches and pains, a wind that blows others ill an’ him good. He ain’t got the deeds to show for it, no securities that folks’ll alwa’s be ailin’. Here,” drawing a roll of papers from his coat pocket, “is receipted bills for all them drugs. Just cast your eye over them,” giving them to her.

“I shouldn’t understand them if I did,” Daisy said, smiling in her great amusement, but not taking them.

Mark saw the smile, and was encouraged to proceed—if he needed encouragement.

“I pay my way as I go. I pay for my clothes as I go, and for my jewelry too. There was a girl in New York,” he went on, “what had her eye on me, but she wa’n’t my style, so I didn’t bite. She was too gaudy—nothing gaudy takes me. So,” putting the receipts into his pocket, “that’s why I took to you. All you’ve got to do is to name the day.”

“The day!” she cried, moving her chair back, as he stretched out his yellow hand to take hers.

“Don’t be skittish. I know how girls play off. They think it makes a fellow like ’em more. Of course it don’t do to be too forward, but you can be forward with me if you like. Come rest on this bosom,” holding out his arms and expanding the said bosom.

“Mr. Millard—” Daisy began, still retreating.

“Come rest on this bosom,” Mark kept on, “come,

love, come ! 'Tain't every day you have such an offer made you. Men don't grow on bushes," seeing that she came not and rested.

"No ; nor every day that I have to refuse an offer as I shall yours," returned Daisy very ungraciously, considering that Mark had paid her the greatest compliment that man can pay to woman.

"Don't be offish," still extending the arm. "Don't be offish. 'Taint every woman that I ask to be Mrs. Mark Millard. Come rest on this bosom."

"I am very sorry that you have asked me ; for I cannot accept your offer," she said, more kindly, yet so determinedly that it entered Mark's dull brain that she might be in earnest. His arms fell, and hung at his sides, his bosom subsided, and he sat staring at her with his weak watery eyes. Service would soon be over now : they were singing the last hymn, and then she would be freed from his hateful presence.

"I ain't to be sneezed at that way," he said at length. "'Twas the old woman any how," he added : "she'd set her heart on having you for a daughter-in-law, and so I popped the question for her." Then he stared again in silence. Daisy sat with bent head, toying with her handkerchief, and listening to the singing, wondering if they would sing the whole hymn through, and was thankful when she heard the "Amen."

Mark was surprised. He had never been so much surprised in his life before, nor had he ever known of such poor taste ; it was evident that that ignorant doc-

tor was preferred before him—him : Mark Millard !
“ Well,” he said, “ there’s no accounting for taste, as the old woman said when she kissed her cow.”

As this remark admitted no reply, Daisy made none. The people were coming out of the church, and Mark, hearing them, rose to go.

“ It’s time I was off. I’ll see you again about this matter or send the old woman round.”

“ It will be of no use : you have my answer.”

Mark muttered, “ good night,” and went off in a maze.

The family came from church, but Daisy told nothing of what had occurred. They saw a bright spot on either of her cheeks, and from that night she grew weaker.

But the doctor came no more.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

“For all the Athenians and strangers which were there, spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.”

—ACTS xvii : 21.

“NO,” said Mrs. Barker, at the supper table a few evenings later—“no, I never was as deceived by any family in my life before as I was by those Platts : and Mis’ Pepper she says so, too. But it is over now.”

“Why, I don’t see that they’ve done any thing dreadful,” said Miss Amelia.

“I did like Mis’ Platt,” Mrs. Barker went on, “and so did Mis’ Pepper and the deacon and all of us ; and that shows just exactly the ingratitude of human nature, and how we were deceived. Mis’ Pepper says a minister ought to come on six months’ trial before he is called, and so I think. A man that’ll stand a six months’ trial is the man we want. Mr. Pepper was there when we were talking and of course he had something to say to hurt her feelings. ‘A new broom sweeps clean,’ says he, ‘but you can’t expect much of an old one, specially after you’ve picked it all to pieces.’ ‘There,’ says Mis’ Pepper, flying up, ‘we’ve heard enough of you : you may leave. ‘Of course,’ says he, going out, ‘nobody wants to hear plain truths.’ Oh, it’s awful how that man does abuse her ! It makes my hair stand on an end to hear him

talk to her. There, 'Melie, the doctor's tea is out. That hired girl of yours, Jessie, has let this tea boil."

"Mother dear," said Mrs. Scott, sweetly, "tell us what dreadful thing Mrs. Platt has been guilty of."

"Nothing so particular, only folks are disappointed in him. Deacon Lawson don't like his preaching; he thinks his sermons are too long. Deacon Calfort says he don't pray earnest enough. Mis' Grimms says he don't read enough Bible out of the pulpit, and that he wears his vests too low. And Mis' Wemple, her sister-in-law (Mis' Grimms was a Wemple), says that he drawls the hymns, when he reads them, and so it goes; everybody is disappointed. And then Mis' Platt she's insulted Mis' Lawson and Mis' Sugden right face to face, and that ain't what a minister's wife is for. You know yourself, doctor, it's the pride of a church to have a minister's wife look nice and genteel. Now, there's Mis' Brentwell she alwa's looks like a lady; but Mis' Platt is a shame to the community. She's dreadful neat and all that, but there ain't any style to her. Mis' Calfort and Mis' Pepper got talking about it one day, and they came to the conclusion that she'd look better if she wore hoops. So they talked it up among the ladies, and appointed Mis' Sugden and Mis' Lawson a committee to talk to her about it."

"And they went?" said the doctor.

"They went, and she insulted them."

"I should have turned them out of doors," said Silas.

"If she'd have turned them out of doors, Mr. Platt

would have been turned out of the church very soon. We thought, you see, that she'd say, 'Thank you for your kind suggestion, ladies. I shall act upon it,' and go out that afternoon and get a hoop skirt, but not she. She sat bolt upright and looked 'em straight in the face, and said, 'Ladies, allow me to manage my own private affairs.' Just that and no more, and hasn't worn—"

"Oh, you're just at tea!" called a cheery voice at the window, and in a moment Martha Morris' rosy face appeared at the door. "Good evening, all," she said, as she entered.

"Sit down with us and have a cup of tea," said Miss Amelia, when they had returned her greeting.

"Oh my stars! I couldn't drink a drop to save me. I've just got up from the supper table. Maria's home, and I ran off and left her to wash the dishes. How cosey you do look here! Mis' Scott, what do you think Mr. Van Pike says about your house?"

"No little bird has told me."

"He says that it's the handsomest house in Newfield, and that it displays—oh I forget what! but it displays something."

"How are Maria and her husband getting on?" inquired Miss Amelia.

"Oh splendid!" walking around to look at the pictures on the walls. "John's coming down after Maria next week, and he's going to bring a cousin of his with him, for me, he says. The very idea!" with a loud laugh, "as though I'd look at him. His name is

Jonathan Vanderwerken. Did you ever ! I couldn't say it in six months. Oh," she said, turning from the pictures, and sitting down, "did you hear the news about the Bornes ?"

"Law no," said Mrs. Barker, "what is it ?"

"He's left the Baptist and joined our church."

"Do tell," cried Miss Amelia.

"Yes : and he's got a place where he gets twelve hundred dollars a year salary, and lives in an elegant house, and keeps seven servants."

"Well, I'm glad to hear that the poor man's troubles are over," said Miss Amelia.

"Who told you ?" asked Mrs. Barker, doubtingly.

"Oh, he wrote to Mr. Brentwell, and I heard it from there. Oh," suddenly, "did you hear about Mark Millard ?"

"No," said Mrs. Barker, "what happened to him ?"

"He's engaged," was the announcement.

"Engaged ! To whom ? Who would marry him ?"

"That horrid fellow !" said Mrs. Scott, shuddering to think how horrid he really was.

"Why ! Who do you think ? I could scarcely believe my ears when I heard it, but it's true ; he told the person who told me."

"But who is it ?" said Mrs. Barker again.

"Daisy Brentwell," was the announcement.

"Daisy Brentwell !" every one echoed, yet not every one : Thurston was silent.

He sat like one suddenly turned to marble. Many

curious eyes were turned on his face ; but they saw no sign. There was a sound of voices in his ears, but he heard no words—sure he had heard enough. After a long time—it seemed long to him—they left the table, and then he found himself alone in his office, sitting before his table, leaning his arms upon it, and his head on his arms. Not thinking—not daring to think, but almost stupefied by the blow. There must have been a few thoughts left, or may be it was a dumb instinct that prompted the next action. And it was a long time before he roused himself, and then he wrote a letter. It was addressed to a stranger, a Dr. De Laine, of New York.

In less than a week he received an answer to it. It seemed to be a favorable answer ; for he smiled as he read it, and then sat down and wrote to his mother. And when she received this, she was glad, too. “Dear boy,” she said, when she had read it, “and he’s coming home at last.”

It was soon known in Newfield that Dr. St. James had gone, and that a stranger was in his place. Mother Wade took it upon herself to investigate the matter. And the morning after the arrival of the stranger, she might have been seen going from house to house, collecting facts, comparing notes, and finally, when all was known that could be known, and a great deal more—she repaired to the only house in the village where they never knew the latest news, that she might be first to impart the information. That house was St. Paul’s rectory.

Daisy was lying on the lounge, looking pale and weak. Mrs. Brentwell sat near her, sewing, and Mr. Brentwell was reading aloud. Mother Wade entered with her usual profound curtesy.

"Law, how bad you look!" was her greeting to Daisy. "It jes seems as ef you get poorer every day. Why there ain't nothin' but skin and bones left. I was a-sayin' to Jane this morning, 'Jane,' says I, 'I never see any one dwindle away as Daisy Brentwell does. It's my opinion,' says I, 'that she won't live the winter out.' 'An' mine too,' says Jane. I'm rale consarned for you. How's your cough?"

"It's better than it was, thank you."

"No, it isn't, and never will be," sitting down, "while you keep worrying about Horatio. You hain't submitted to the Lord's will. The devil works in you yet. He alwa's works in young folks. When I was young, I was jes full of him. I'd want every thing my own way, which folks can't have in this world. All good things is took from us. But then, where's the use o' sighin'? this ain't our abidin' place; we're only here for a few days. What's the use o' rebellin' where rebelin' don't make things no better? You've got to submit after all. Ain't them your sentiments, Mr. Brentwell?"

"I think my daughter does submit. We all submit to the chastening, and we know that God does not willingly afflict us. But we are human, and we mourn; but not as they who have no hope—"

"Jus' so," interrupted Mrs. Wade. "That's jus'

what I was tellin' Jane. But it ain't his dyin' so much as the awfulness of his goin' off so sudden-like, without a moment to prepare in. As I was tellin' Jane, if he'd 'ave died in his bed, he might have had time to think over his sins and repent of 'em. Still there was one comfort ; Horatio wa'n't no dancer."

"It is truly an awful thing," Mr. Brentwell replied, "to be summoned from this world without a moment's warning ; but my son had no unsettled account with his Maker : each night found him prepared for death. He knew not the day nor the hour, and he *watched*."

"So I was telling Jane. 'Jane,' says I, 'no one knows the day nor the hour.' My Jane is an awful serious minded girl, ef she ain't no professor. She was telling me this morning only, how she'd like to join the 'Piscopals, but she couldn't endure to go there and hear Hattie Putnam play that organ after the beautiful way Horatio used to play it. It was affecting to hear her talk."

"I am sorry that should keep her from service," said Mrs. Brentwell. "Hattie is a fine organist."

"Oh, she plays well enough, but it reminds her of Horatio. Law ! to think how intimate the doctor and him was, and now they're both gone."

"Both gone !" said Mrs. Brentwell, while Daisy turned her face anxiously toward the woman.

"Why, haven't ye heard ? Well they do say that the doctor went off without biddin' a soul good-bye. Crissy Wells was hintin' that every thing wa'n't all right, and

I heard to-day that he owes Miss 'Melia a hundred dollars for board. But the new doctor is mighty spruce-looking. Have you seen him?"

"Why, Dr. St. James has not gone away," said Mr. Brentwell, "I saw him yesterday."

"He went last night, and the new one came yesterday morning. He's come for good, they say. Dr. St. James ain't never coming back."

Daisy listened, with her dark eyes fixed on the woman's face. Then she closed them to shut out the world. She felt as if some one had plunged a knife into her heart, and that her life blood was flowing out drop by drop. She sank down, down, down, and knew no more for a long time. They saw that she lay motionless, and with closed eyes, but she lay that way so often now, that they thought she was only resting.

Paul entered at that moment, and as usual drew all attention upon himself.

"Well, Master Paul," said Mrs. Wade, "you look well."

"I am well," he returned in as polite a tone as he could consistently use to Mrs. Wade.

"Do you go to the 'Cademy nowadays?"

He replied that he did.

"I thought one spell o' sendin' Tim there, an' went up to have a talk with the teacher about it, an' I found out that they didn't teach 'breviations, so I give up his going. You can't make a gentleman of a boy till he learns 'breviations." She did not stay long after

Paul came. She had told all she knew, and what else should she stay for ?

“ What makes Daisy so white and still ? ” Paul cried, as the door closed after the old woman.

Then they found that she had fainted.

CHAPTER XL.

“Come in the evening, or come in the morning ;
Come when you’re looked for, or come without warning ;
Kisses and welcome you’ll find here before you,
And the oftener you come here the more I’ll adore you !
Light is my heart since the day we were plighted ;
Red is my cheek that they told me was blighted.”

—THOMAS DAVIS.

DAISY was very ill for weeks after that. Death came and stood by the bedside and stretched forth his bony hand to grasp her, but the angel of life came between. There was a fierce conflict ; the angel conquered, and Death fled for this time : Daisy lived.

She opened her eyes to consciousness one chill November morning, and looked wearily around the room. Her mother sat by her side, and a grave-looking gentleman stood near. Christie was there, looking pale and with swollen eyelids, as if she had shed many tears. Lestie, more gentle than ever before, bent over and kissed her, which made the grave gentleman smile ; then she turned her face away and closed her tired eyes again. She heard them say “she will live now,” and, wondering what they meant, and why she should not live, she went to sleep.

She was stronger in a few days, and they told her how ill she had been, and that the grave, kind man was

the new physician, Dr. De Laine, that Mrs. Wade had told them of that day now long ago. She gained strength slowly, and it was many days before she was able to sit up. On the first bright day they carried her down stairs, and she sat in the great rocking chair, brought from the parlor, wrapped in shawls with pillows at her back. Lestie sat with her, while the others were busy. She had a great quantity of news to tell her. Her illness had seemed a signal for every one to make some change in their manner of living, or to give up living altogether. Some had died, and some were married. Martha Morris was really engaged to a Mr. Jonathan Vanderwerker, John West's cousin. Mrs. Scott had gone back to the city, and every one said that she had refused Mr. Green before she went. The Millards had failed, and gone away ; no one knew where, and the old mansion was deserted again. "And do you know, Daisy," Lestie continued, "it came out afterward, that Mark was very intemperate, and that he was not ill at all. Dr. De Laine told us about it, but it seems Dr. St. James knew it always though he never told us. Wasn't he queer ? Dr. De Laine is going soon. I don't know who'll come in his place. Every one hopes Dr. St. James will come back, but it's not likely : he's out West now—"

Mrs. Brentwell called Lestie just then, and Daisy was left alone. She leaned her head on her hand and gazed out of the window upon the bleak hills beyond the river, that were so green that bright morning they

sailed to the island. The sun that had shone warm then, was hidden now by leaden clouds, and the river which had sparkled in its rays looked cold and dull reflecting those clouds.

She thought of those who had gone to that excursion, and how some were far away, and how everything was changed. Mrs. Scott had left Newfield : Silas had gone to college. Thurston was gone too, forever, she said to herself, and all that was over. Paul was changed greatly. He whose constant misdemeanors had formerly troubled them so much, was now the pride of their hearts. And Horatio ! He was in Paradise. He alone of all that number was at rest ; the others, though many were far away, struggled on in the old life—but Horatio had entered the new.

She buried Thurston in the grave with Horatio, and thought of him as dead, and loved him “for the love he bore,” in the days past ; but for her brother she mourned no longer ; he yet lived. Then she turned her thoughts to herself and remembered what a discontented jealous heart had been hers ; how unhappy she had been, when even Horatio and Thurston were both there, and loved her ! And to-day sitting by the fire, alone and ill, looking at the dull river and leaden clouds, there was a peace in her heart that she had never known before ; a peace that passeth all understanding ; a peace God sends to those who love Him, and put their whole trust in Him.

* * * * *

Christmas tide was drawing near. Snow covered

the ground, and the villagers kindly informed each other, as usual, of the change in the weather.

They were making the Christmas wreaths for St. Paul's Church ; and a party of merry young workers were assembled in the school-room. Lestie and Christie were in the midst of them. Lestie was quieter than she was last year ; her voice was softer, and her laugh sounded less frequently. Silas, home for the holidays, was helping and hindering Christie. Herbert was in the church with those who were hanging the wreaths. Daisy and Paul were by themselves in the vestry room, which connected the school-house and church, and where the evergreens and holly branches had been taken,—breaking off twigs, which sundry small boys carried to the wreath-makers.

“ I know the church won't look anyhow this year, Daisy,” Paul was saying. “ They've got that wreath on the organ all crooked.”

She turned, and looked out of the door.

“ I don't see that they have,” she said.

“ Of course they have ; they ain't to blame though. Its 'cause Horatio ain't here to do it. There ain't a soul in Newfield that can hang a wreath like he could. Now, is there ? ”

He looked up into her face, as if her decision would settle the matter forever.

“ Dear little Paul,” she returned, stroking his fair hair, “ we loved Horatio so much that we thought always that whatever he did was done exactly right.”

“Well, he could hang wreaths right, and the church looked beautiful when he hung ’em. Don’t you remember that Dr. Doreann said he never saw any thing so handsome as it was last year?”

“Yes, I remember. And this Christmas they both will worship in a Temple not made or adorned by hands.”

“That’s so,” meditatively; “and we did not think so then either, did we? I say, Daisy,” suddenly, “Horatio was pretty near right about Sam Lukens.”

“We always knew that!”

“Well, I know it now; and I’m mighty sorry for the way I acted. I used to do awful wicked things when you didn’t know it.”

Daisy shuddered. “Don’t tell me about it. It’s all over now.”

“You bet it is. I only wish Horatio knew what a good boy I am.”

“He does know; he is with us as much as he was before. And he knows he did not give his life in vain.”

“I say, Daisy, Horatio died for me; didn’t he?”

“Yes, Paul,” she said, unhesitatingly.

“My elder brother.”

“Yes.”

“Well the Saviour is my Elder Brother. Now, that’s just the way He died for us; I’ve just thought!”

“Not exactly the same, but it will make you realize some of the great love the Saviour has for us.”

“Yes; and I’m going to be a good boy because the Saviour and Horatio died for me.”

Daisy smiled at the child's understanding. She was glad that he had begun to realize the love of the Saviour in dying for him and she would not check his enthusiasm by drawing a line between His death and Horatio's.

"Don't you think," he said, after a pause, "that Lestie is better than she used to be?"

"She's more gentle."

"I'll bet mother's glad we're going to be so good."

"I know she is."

"I don't see how she used to stand us wicked children; Horatio, you know, was the least little bit cross sometimes, that is, to me; he never was to any one else. Well, he's all right now. Herbert and Christie always were good: they were born good, and you—"

"Oh, I hope I shall never be angry again, Paul."

"I don't believe you ever will."

"Paul, are you there?" cried Herbert from the church.

"Yes."

"Come here and hold these wreaths for me. They have all gone and left me alone."

Paul brushed his work from his lap to the floor, and ran out. He soon forgot the greens in helping and advising Herbert, and did not return. Daisy, with her thoughts for company, did not heed his absence. Some one came into the room once, and stopping a moment, went away. She was sitting with her back to the door, and did not turn to see who it was. She heard her father's voice as he came into the church, giving Herbert

some directions, and calling Paul down from the top of a high ladder. Then she heard him say, as though he were shaking hands with some one. "My dear friend, this is a surprise ! When did you come ?"

The "dear friend," replied in such a low tone that she did not even catch the sound of his voice ; but she cared little.

"Do you expect to remain in Newfield ?" Mr. Brentwell continued.

The friend must have said "yes," for his next words were : "I am glad to hear that. All Newfield will be glad. I'll see you again," and went out.

Some one came to the vestry door, and stood there a long time in silence. She thought it was Herbert, that he had come to see the effect of his work in the organ loft, and she did not turn her head. Then that some one came in, closed the door carefully, and came to her.

"Daisy."

"Thurston !" she cried, springing up.

He held out his arms to her, and she without farther bidding went to him.

"Daisy," he said, as he held her to him ; "I have come back to you. May I stay ?"

"Thurston ! Thurston, you must never leave me again."

THE END.

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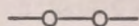
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